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Issue No. 3

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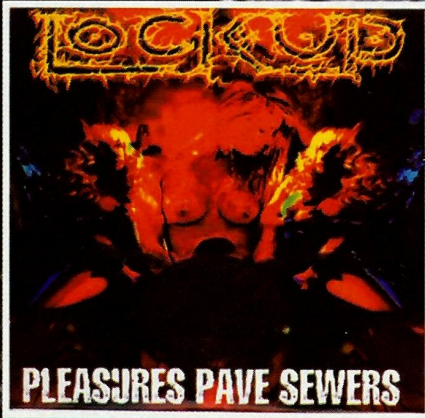
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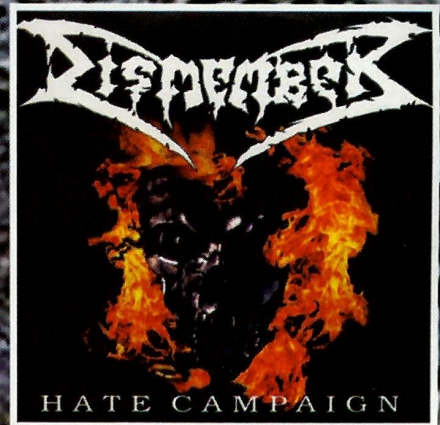
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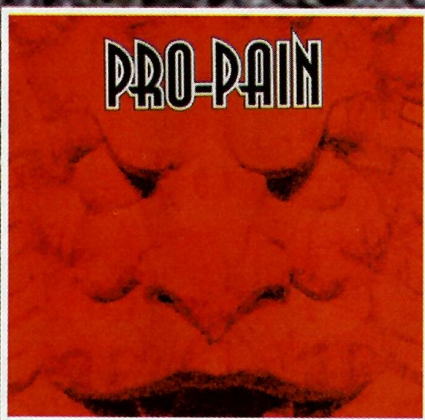
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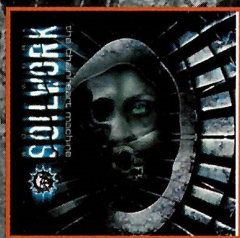
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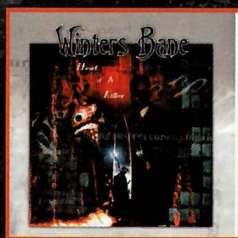
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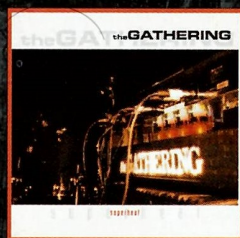
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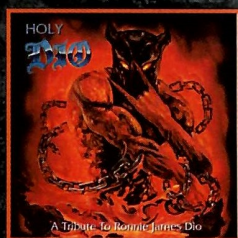
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It's about time, huh?



feel like hanging up a sign that reads "Under New Management."

That's right, a year or so after this issue of *Juggernaut* was supposed to come out, here it is. A little worse for wear, but ready to slingshot into the millennium with a new Captain at the helm. And that's me, Scott Hefflon, a guy you may or may not know as the guy who runs *Lollipop Magazine*, and helps out such Northeast magazines as *Under the Volcano* and *Rude International*. For those interested in such things, *Juggernaut* is still owned and printed by Implosion Publishing (home of a CD design and duping facility, as well as the also-on-hiatus *Implosion Magazine* and *Bloodsongs*), it's simply run by a metal-head editor who's enjoyed the sound of roaring chainsaws since he heard a scratched up copy of Black Sabbath's *Masters of Reality* in, like, fifth grade. I don't know what year that was, and I don't want to think about it.

My goal is to keep the editorial content as extreme as ever – covering all the metals and cores, throwing in some jazz, ambient, noise, and Icelandic Death Chants whenever possible – as well as providing something *Juggernaut* hasn't had to date: a steady production schedule. Sure, y'all want your magazine to be run by fun-lovin' fans of the music, but someone has to be the slave-driving prick who collects all the cocktail napkins that pass for reviews when it's time to send The Beast to press.

So you've waited long enough... In truth, *Juggernaut* had a few false starts

between last issue and this one, but since I don't know the names of everyone involved, I don't know who to credit/damn. While it's ironic that a magazine named after a powerful, unstoppable force that crushes everything in its path could grind to a halt of its own dead weight, I pledge that that won't happen again. Metal as a genre is stronger, more socially accepted, and more diverse than it's ever been, and *Juggernaut* is just too cool a magazine to let rot in its premature grave. Better the shambling monstrosity pop a few ephedrine tablets and move its ugly ass. And that's where you, the patient and not-so-patient readers, are lucky: I'm a speed freak. I'm addicted to speed – the verb, not the drug – and I think making things happen is almost as good as sex.

So here's the scoop: *Juggernaut* is now based out of Boston, using the same PO Box as *Lollipop*, and until the new phone line is installed, the same phone number as well. Many of the original writers, photographers, and designers are still on board, and the same printer and distribution companies are being used, so really, very little has changed. Subscriptions will be handled through the Boston office, as will all advertising and editorial. Mail order and distribution will continue to be handled by Implosion Publishing in Orlando.

I'd like to thank Dave and Cynthia, the publishers, for having faith in me and believing that I could make this work. And without getting all gushy and stuff, I'd like to thank the industry folks who've been very supportive and offered ideas and encouragement during the trying first cou-



New Editor Scott Hefflon and friends.

ple weeks. As with anything, getting the momentum going is always the hardest part, especially when what you're trying to get going is a magazine that stopped dead in its tracks over a year ago, and conked out twice when various people tried to kickstart it. Those days are over – the Beast has awoken and is flexing its muscles once more. Again, thanks to those who contributed to this issue, cranked out a few reviews to replace those that were so old they just couldn't be run, and for those in the business who believe I can pull this off.

I'd say my door is always open if you have any words of wisdom or ideas on where this magazine should go, but it gets nippy here in Boston so my door's closed, locked, and the blinds are drawn. But feel free to email.

— Scott Hefflon, Editor

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As we roll into a new dawn, I think it's appropriate to look back on **Witchery**, the band that brought the lusty beer-goggled metal spirit back into our beloved genre. OK, so maybe it isn't the appropriate use of that high-falutin' new concept called culture jamming, but on my rudimentary grayscale, these guys jam the gears of metal culture until the gears break, smoke starts wafting from the engine housing, and all you can do is slip away with a juvenile snicker. And they trash yer tranny fast, getting in, getting it done, throwing a collective metal history at the heap with little thought, quick in the knowledge that what roars out of the raw will pass the fresh factor. There's black metal, '80s metal, thrash metal, rock'n'roll (actually, none of that: just the beating heart), and there's an agitated, impatient death.

It works because it's done quickly, generally at high velocities, with no tolerance for paralysis by analysis. Patrick Jensen hustles us through his day. "We have a rehearsal room Linköping, where the band is based. [Bass player] Sharlee [D'Angelo] and I live in Gothenburg, and when we go up there, it's very intense because we have to get so much shit done – I'm doing stuff with The Haunted and he's got Mercyful Fate. So a normal day during these two weeks tends to look like this: I get to the rehearsal room at ten in the morning and I try to write stuff. It's not a sure thing that I'll come up with anything. I take a break around 4:00, get a bite to eat, then everybody comes in at



Witchery

An Interview with Patrick Jensen, Witchery Guitarist

By Martin Popoff

5:00 and I show them the puny amount of stuff I've come up with and we try to put the songs together. We rehearse until midnight or 2:00 a.m., then everyone goes to sleep. Then I'm there again at 10:00 the next morning. Being on that time schedule with all the pressure, we have to more or less use every good riff

like, 'This is unreal! This can't be us. What was this!?' Nobody had produced it. We just plugged in and recorded it. We'd recorded the whole album except for solos and vocals – ten songs in two days."

The material reflects their impatience

we can come up with – you know if it sounds rock'n'roll or Judas Priest or whatever!"

"Everything is live, except solos and vocals," explains Jensen. "It's such a shitty studio. The fuckin' 24-track recorder can't even punch in and out if we make a mistake. I mean, *everything* is live."

With respect to their album *Dead, Hot and Ready*, released in early Fall '99 to a firestorm of critical praise, Jensen lets on that the material was forged quickly, but actually months before. And as befits their punk rock character, it didn't stop the band from using it. "We recorded the album a year ago, then re-recorded the album in December '98. We re-played everything. We don't throw away any songs. We can't afford to write fourteen songs in two weeks, it's ten songs that are a go."

Literally, what's the band all about?

"Who knows?" he laughs.

Magic can be instant, and that's what happened when the band played back these barely magnetized tapes. "As I said, we chose the studio knowing it was a piece of shit. This was just for fun, so when we recorded and mixed the album [the notorious debut, *Restless & Dead*], and listened back to it, we were

Everybody just plays the low E-string... duh, duh, duh, duh... and a guy in big shorts screams his lungs out. I wanna have a good time and break out the beer.

with the serious forms of extreme metal. Rock'n'roll was supposed to be fun, re-member?

Jensen: "Well, I would see it more as a reaction against the aggro metal, because I am so



bored with that crap. Everybody just plays the low E-string... duh, duh, duh... and a guy in big shorts screams his lungs out. I wanna have a good time and break out

We don't just dress all in black and look like we drink red wine and quote poetry all the time.

the beer. Our influences are bands like Accept, Destruction, Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, AC/DC, early Motörhead, Mercyful Fate, the first Exodus, the stuff that we enjoyed growing up. I don't want to mention any names, but when a retro band copies a band from beginning to end – the same kind of song titles, the same appearance, the same kind of production, solos, and singing – you can really tell it's a rip off. But if we kind of use '90s black metal influences and the Accept 1982's chugga, chugga thing, you know, it gets to be interesting." Amen.

And live, that headbang factor rings loud and true. "Yeah, I think we give a good show," offers Jensen. "We don't just dress all in black and look like we drink red

wine and quote poetry all the time. We want to give people their money's worth. If we can have ten half-naked girls in vinyl dancing on stage, we'd do it because that's the show I

I can't understand all these bands today that take two-and-a-half years between albums because they're so complex they have to study math before they write a song.

want to see. If we can have someone dress up like a werewolf and come out during 'The Howling,' it'd be great!"

"We hate everything that sounds clinical and clean," continues Jensen on the very factor that makes Witchery

knows what he's talking about. I guess that's why they sound a little more underground."

So now it's time for the next album; that is, if everybody can synchronize their schedules. But in the true spirit of

Witchery, expect it to happen soon.

"That's something else I can't understand," says Jensen. "Back in the early '80s, you got an album every year from Saxon, Judas Priest, whatever. I can't understand all these bands today that take two-and-a-half years between albums because they're so complex they have to study math before they write a song. That's the point we're trying to make by putting out lots of music quickly; we want to get these people to shape up," he laughs. **J**



rock. "We want to bring the dirt back into it. In fact, the worst example I can give you of a band sounding too clean and perfect is King Diamond, even Mercyful Fate. You can hear *everything*. It doesn't rock; it's just so rigid."

The last Mercyful Fate, 9, is a pretty gutsy, grinding affair, no?

"Well, that's just because Sharlee's been bitching at King. King knew Sharlee has great input in Witchery, and then he was going through magazines, like *Burn!* from Japan, and he saw two pages on Witchery. He realized Sharlee actually



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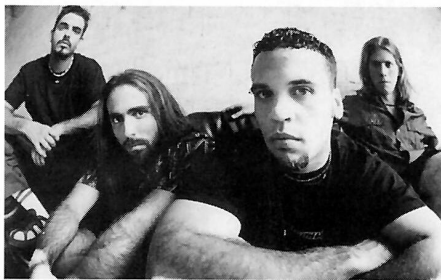
Puya put a little Cha-Cha in their thrash

By Holly Day

Time was when you knew what to expect from metal-heavy bass: a drum kit being pummeled to scrap, some Randy Rhodes-style guitar-wanking, shirtless, overweight men with bad body hair flicking waves of sticky sweat over an inebriated crowd droning quasi-Satanic mantras learned from watching too many after-school specials.

OK, some things will always stay the same. But the music has definitely changed. Elements of salsa, rap, ska, and even jazz have infiltrated and completely revitalized the once-dying institution of heavy metal, bringing whole new audiences into the fold with it.

Puya¹ started out as an instrumental group in Puerto Rico, playing neighborhood parties and a few venues available to them on the island. Shortly after enlisting Sergio Curbelo as their lead singer, the band relocated to the States to find a bigger reception. Their first drummer, Eduardo Paniagua, was already living in Berkeley, California, when Curbelo and the rest of Puya – Harold Hopkins and Ramón Ortiz – hooked up with him and recruited him for



From left: Ortiz, Paniagua, Curbelo and Hopkins of Puya

the empty drummer slot. The foursome eventually settled in Florida, where they fell in love with Latin music all over again. Although previously their music had mostly mirrored the metal stations in their homeland – the band were weaned on Metallica and Sepultura – Puya suddenly found room in the middle of heavy guitar riffs and pounding drums for horns and a traditional percussion section. Their lyrics went from being mostly English with a little Spanish mixed in to nearly half-and-half.

Curbelo met his bandmates in 1992. "I was one of a string of invited guest singers," he said. "The rest of the guys had known each other for a long time: Ramón and Eduardo knew each other in high school,

and Harold and Ramón met each other right after high school. I was just kicking around in garage bands when I met up with them.

"All of us went to college, back home. I didn't finish. I went to college basically because I had to do something, because I couldn't just sit around at home. It was 'Hey, college sounds pretty good.' I ended up taking a lot of accounting classes."

Puya's first major label release, *Fundamental* (MCA), comes off like a schizophrenic jam session between Carlos Santana and Pantera. Hardcore guitar riffs mix with Latin horns and percussion. The music flows easily from straight-out thrash to salsa mambo, then back again. The songs encourage listeners to treasure their cultural heritage and stand up against tyranny. "Oasis" especially stands out as a tribute to the band's undying love for their native Puerto Rico.

It wouldn't be quite fair to lump *Fundamental* into any crossover subgenre of either world music or metal. Maybe it's time to pull out the old Scrabble board and make up a new genre: Latin metal? Thrashmatazz? Whatever... **J**

1. Translated, "Puya" has two meanings: (1) a strong, black Puerto Rican coffee that gets you really, really hyper, and (2) the piercing point of a sharp-edged object.

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By placing musical quality over ferocity Pasadena label The End is on the rise

By Scott Wilcox

Since 1998, The End Records has been quietly releasing extreme music tied with a common thread that sets apart the Pasadena, California-based upstart from its peers: Bands that come out on The End favor great musicianship and atmosphere over mindless brutality.

Russia's **Mental Home** have released two albums so far with The End. The first, *Vale*, is not a masterpiece but shows great promise of things to come. Keyboards add a symphonic feel to the music and mesh well with sorrowful guitar leads and powerful, up-front bass rhythms. However, when not singing death metal style, Sergey Dmitriev's raspy voice doesn't do justice to the music behind it. Still, this is a small complaint. The overall feel is that of a psycho-thriller soundtrack – in a word: haunting. The title track is great, as is "Southern Calm Waters," which features some great guitar interaction, and the slow, death metal crunch of "The Euphoria."

Vale's follow-up, *Black Art*, comes in a beautiful Digipack and features some nice progression; the band have not fully arrived but are well on their way. On the sophomore effort, they seem more comfortable with the use of melody and employ some nice looping rhythms in the vein of Katatonia. My favorite here is "Pagan Freedom," for which a CD-ROM video is included. This will be a band to watch in the coming years.

My favorite band on The End is **Nocturnal Mortum**, also from Russia. Their album *Goat Horns* features symphonic black metal with some Celtic and folk influence added to the mix. This may seem schizophrenic, but it isn't. Nocturnal Mortum manage to pull off melody and evil darkness simultaneously. The album opens with "Black Moon Overture," a totally symphonic track that employs flutes and other wind instruments. Most of the album is midpaced, save the diabolical urgency of "Unholy Orathania," and the epic "Vele's Scrolls" is the standout track.

Washington's **Sculptured** are obviously influenced by Gothenburg death metal, but the band maintain its own unique sound. Vocals range from clean to death, with the clean vocals sounding a bit like Live. Sculptured are extremely progressive, mixing many different elements into their music, at times reminding me of Dream Theater. The closed-minded should beware, as trumpet and piano are used on tracks such as "Almond Beauty" and "Fashioned by Blood and Tears." Not for everyone, but a rare treasure for others.

Odes of Ecstasy's Embossed Dream in Four Acts is a sort of metal opera. Again, there are many symphonic influences used, mainly piano and strings as well as female vocals. One word to best describe this band is "classy." I would compare this album to Arcturus, but not quite as over-the-top; this is a bit more accessible to traditional metal listeners. The homage to Holst's "Mars, Bringer of War" in the epilogue is a nice touch for those familiar with classical music.

Epoch of Unlight, hailing from the unholy waste-

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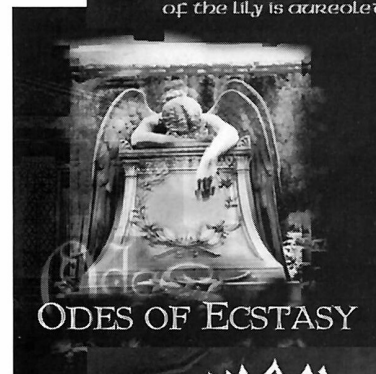
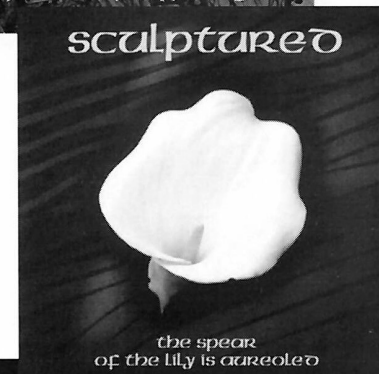
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lands of Tennessee, have overcome lineup changes and record company bullshit to release their first full-length, which is sure to burn Graceland to the ground and piss on the ashes. Their style is combination of black and death metals, with In Flames's love of melody thrown into the mix. The result is a nice combination of melodicism and extremity, which, surprisingly, is pulled off quite well. There are still some kinks to work out; for example, the sound is a bit thin at times, which could be fixed by adding another guitar. The best song is "Burning As One," a melancholy, yet speedy piece with some great guitar progressions.

Scholomance (weird name), from Missouri, do a rare thing by hitting a home run on their first effort. *A Treatise On Love* is a treasure, with music so deep that the excellent black/death vocals aren't even needed to appreciate it. Scholomance use a lot of keyboards which meld perfectly with the music, instead of being layered on top as an afterthought. Many different moods are represented on the album, from the nightmarish "Pride of the Serpent Winds" to "Snowfall," a beautiful instrumental piece. Countless awe-inspiring moments abound, such as the organ segue into the blastbeats at the beginning of "End" and the different layers of instrumentation playing in different times at the start of "Toy" – an entire album could be based on those 30 seconds.

The End Records releases quality metal albums that deserve multiple listens to fully appreciate their majesty. Chances are something here will interest you. For the curious, they offer a compilation of their releases for \$3, postage paid. The albums themselves are available for \$12, postage paid.

J





From left: Janne Wirman, Jaska Raatikainen, Alexi Laiho, Henkka Seppälä and Alexander Kuoppala, a.k.a. Children of Bodom

Children of Bodom mix old with new

By Adrian Bromley

"We didn't know shit about anything when we recorded our first record, *Something Wild*," Alexi "Wildchild" Laiho said. "It was all just thrown together. The writing, the recording and everything else that came along with it. We weren't even expecting to sell 1,000 copies of the record. But something clicked, and people picked up on it. We were onto something."

Enough people picked up on the 1998 debut to gain **Children of Bodom** recognition beyond the borders of their Finnish homeland to people who had never heard of the band's namesake: Lake Bodom, home of the most notorious murders in Finland's history.

Soon afterward, the quintet – guitarist and vocalist Laiho, drummer Alexander Kuoppala, bassist Henkka Seppälä and keyboardist Janne Wirman – released *Hatebreeder*, their second full-length. A natural progression from *Something Wild*, *Hatebreeder* is chock-full of black metal operatic assaults coated with heavy-duty guitar solos, haunting keyboards, and textured interludes.

Laiho said he had to block out a lot of potential stresses when the band began to record the album: "I had to focus on music that suited what we wanted to do, rather than what people expected. I'm happy with the end result. We've gotten a lot of experience since *Something Wild* came out, with all the touring we've done and just living and surviving in this music business. I think we've improved as musicians, and I, for one, have improved as a songwriter."

He continued: "Writing material takes time for me. I go through phases... I'll usually be able to write for two months, and then my mind will be blank for writing for the next three. It gets stressful when you're trying to work on material and nothing is coming to you. The studio is a great place to be; it's where a lot of things change for bands when

they're recording. A lot of ideas shape-shift in the studio. When we go into the studio, I make sure we have the general idea and we work on it from that point on. Sometimes it just takes the smallest idea to help fuel some creativity and alter a song or chorus. I always record everything I come up with in the studio. Who knows where I can use it down the road?"

Children of Bodom's unique blend of old and new metal sets them apart from their peers. "Most of the stuff we play has a lot of old metal influences," Laiho said. "It's heavy metal with black metal tendencies. We have classical metal influences too. Our music is an amalgamation of many musical styles."

"We're not afraid to venture out and play music with massive guitar solos and melodic harmonies... The key thing is to do it with a definite *feel* for it; don't just add it into your sound for the hell of it or 'cause it's the flavor of the month."

Laiho said that the icons of his early guitar days – Yngwie Malmsteen and Steve Vai – influenced the guitar solos on both albums. "I don't hear a certain band and want to sound like that," he said. "I want to do what comes naturally and keep it simple. I think it's more interesting if songs have very technical parts. I get off on that."

"It's funny to watch all these bands out there try to jump on a certain sound and play it sincere," he continued. "You can see right through them most of the time. Take, for example, Hammerfall. They play '80s-style heavy metal... hero metal. It's cool and all to be doing that – I mean, we have our own share of '80s influence too – but after they came out, all of these other metal bands either came out of the woodwork and starting playing that style of metal, or bands added that sound to what they were already doing. It's stupid."

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Metal Church

Attendance Up, Donations Up!

By Martin Popoff

Metal Church is in recoil mode after returning from a successful jaunt around Europe supporting their reunion album *Masterpeace*, released in Fall '99. With venerable UK outfit Thunderhead on the bill, the tour was a welcome blast of traditional old-school metal, which is just what Kurdt Vanderhoof and David Wayne had in mind when they conceived *Masterpeace*.

"I would say it's pretty much what we were shooting for," says Wayne. "And I think we arrived close to the mark, which is something like, say, *The Dark II*, or *Metal Church III* — that is, if Kurdt Vanderhoof or myself had remained in the band. Although we're older and wiser, and a little bit of our anger is gone, I feel this record is pretty much a continuation of the way it *should* have been."

Vanderhoof also stresses the concept of making a record that temporally felt like an extension of the base sound. "I

think it's a good record. It's hard to judge your own stuff. I mean, we've had really mixed reviews. Some people think it's the best stuff we've ever done, and some people hate it. I think for just getting back together, and again, I haven't played any heavy metal for quite a while, I think it's the best we could've done under the circumstances. We intended it to be the best record we could do at the time, without trying to modernize it and say, 'Let's do Metal Church and try to make it sound '90s.' If we're going to do Metal Church, it's going to be '80s because that's what we're known for. So that poses a slight problem. We didn't want to create something that wasn't honest; we wanted to keep it true to Metal Church. That's not something you can just switch gears and do. And also, you have to remember that the early stuff with David was 16 years ago. Let's be honest, we're not that angry, and we're 16 years older. But I

think now that we've gotten back in the swing of it again, when we start the next record, we'll be in better shape. Who knows? I think it's a good record, but I don't think it's our *best* record. But it really depends on the listener. We always try to make the best record we can at the time."

Vanderhoof is likely the biggest metal fan among the practitioners of the form you'll ever meet. Ask him about the Internet, and he'll say he loves it, not because it offers the opportunity to sell more records, but because he can look up stuff on all his favorite old bands. And as a musician, he's making a lot of music. He's currently remixing the first Vanderhoof record from 1997 for a U.S. release, adding a bonus cover of Deep Purple's "Burn." His next new music will be the second Vanderhoof record. "This one will be more like Kansas meets Rush. Rush was, like, *my* band," he laughs. "Basically, I think it's leaning that way as a reaction

to the lame music they call rock now. We want to make it really over-the-top, bombastic, like all the stuff you don't hear anymore," he laughs, "and then we're going to do another Metal Church record."

Vanderhoof also wants to get back the rights to the first Hall Aflame album from IRS records and re-release it. There's also talk of putting out the second Hall Aflame album that was never released, perhaps as a double CD. Add to this the fact that his indie retrospective of his pre-Metal Church punk band The Lewd is doing brisk business around his homebase in the Pacific Northwest, and you've got one enthusiastic, versatile, and loud artist.

For David Wayne, Metal Church will always be a vehicle for his activism. An interview with the man is always a lively, enthusiastic discussion about environ-



tics are going, change it. This is something I'm guilty of in the past, complaining and not *doing*. Nowadays, I go down to my party headquarters and I rock-

Perhaps a unifying thread in some of the lyrics is 'don't be a victim, quit whining, do something, get off your mother-freakin' hands, and roll up your sleeves.'

mentalism, the media, even religion. "The title, Masterpeace, can mean peace with the Master, and I don't mean the horned, cloven-hoofed one. Everybody in the band has cleaned up and dried out. We were young men who got a lucrative record deal and thought that the only thing one should spend one's money on is cocaine and fast women, and those days are over. We've learned our lesson. I think a lot of people have to go through the school of hard knocks. I'm certainly one of those people. Perhaps a unifying thread in some of the lyrics is 'don't be a victim, quit whining, do something, get off your mother-freakin' hands, and roll up your sleeves.' If you're sick of the government and you don't like the way poli-

n'roll, man. I'll lick stamps, lick envelopes, I'll sweep the floor, I'll take out the trash for the party, you know? Because this is what I believe in and what I'm passionate about. Kurt's the same way. We've all cleaned up our acts, and thank God for that."

"Keep in mind, I've been an environmentalist my whole life," continues Wayne. "I'm a lover of animals, I backpack in the Cascades, but by the same token, I remember in the '70s, being a very young man and hearing, 'The ice age is coming! The ice age is coming!' That was in *National Geographic*, *Popular Science*. And now it's, 'Global warming his coming! Global warming is coming!' It's like that little chicken running around saying the sky is falling!. It's not clear-cut. What I'm saying is get some books, read some things, don't believe your television set, and take an active part in your community. If you don't, you're just going to stay home, sit around and drink beer, smoke dope, and believe whatever it is that comes down the next pike next. Whatever the snake oil salesmen are hawking as alarmism, you're going to buy into it because it's the current scare, the hip fad. So I say, be smart, read, and if you don't know how to read, for God's sake learn!"



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ATARI TEENAGE RIOT

Atari Teenage Riot have never been known for their subtleties.

The German outfit's "digital hardcore" music – high-speed techno, ultra-loud punk guitar, screamed vocals, and blazing noise textures – has helped define a musical sub-genre and record label of the same name. In addition, the band have become as well known for their fierce leftist/anarchist political policies and "smash the system" rhetoric.

"We are using part of the structure to destroy it the same way we use a computer to make this music," bandleader and vocalist/programmer Alec Empire said.

60 Second Wipeout, their second full-length U.S. release, is the next step in ATR's evolutionary process. Released under a new deal with Elektra Entertainment, the album is as sonically harsh as its predecessors with one noticeable difference – a nearly positive outlook.

Speaking from his Digital Hardcore Records office in Berlin, Empire explained *60 Second Wipeout*'s symbolic title and the album's call for action. "For us, the title symbolizes the whole idea of the record. A lot of people thought we were going to do this millennium record, but we didn't want to do that. We wanted to explain that that's a very Christian way of thinking – all of these 'end of the world' records – because of the year 2000. And we wanted to reduce the title to a really short amount of time in which all possible things can change."

Formed in Berlin in 1992, Atari Teenage Riot set out to challenge "proper" music categories: punk, techno, jungle, etc. Empire, vocalist Hanin Elias, and MC/DJ Carl Crack had become disgusted with the racist/apolitical mindset of the German and U.K. techno scenes and decided to combine their love of hardcore punk, underground techno, and hip-hop with leftist/anarchist politics. Their first single, "Hetzjagd auf Nazis" ("Hunt down the Nazis"), was boycotted by the German rave scene – in particular, DJs and record shops – for its political message when it was released in late '92. That minor setback only strengthened ATR's commitment to continue their fierce approach to music.

The trio released two EPs in 1993 on Phonogram (*Atari Teenage Riot* and *Kids R United*), but when the label wanted to market the band as a novelty rave act, Empire and company took the cash-advance and ran. They immediately started Digital Hardcore Recordings.





BY DANIEL FULLER

ISSUE 3 · JUGGERNAUT

In reflection, like many musicians hell-bent on tearing down political and social systems, the 26-year-old Empire said he felt let down after their initial releases didn't make the impact they had hoped for. And like many other such musicians, Empire secretly held onto an idealistic streak. "We thought we were going to change everything in '95 and then nothing really happened," recalled Empire. Though ATR formed a sizable underground audience and received some major media attention, Empire felt they might have failed at their musical and philosophical goals.

However, 1996 proved to be a banner year. In late '95, during a well-attended New Year's Eve gig with DJ Spooky in New York, Empire had a chance encounter with Beastie Boy (and Grand Royal label honcho) Mike D. Soon after jetting back to Germany, ATR signed a limited distribution arrangement through Grand Royal. Their import-only singles were released domestically in early '96 and their first full-length recording for the U.S. market – the old and new track compilation *Burn, Berlin, Burn* – was out by mid-'97. That release not only sold over 100,000 copies, but brought ATR college radio airplay, exposure on MTV and in music publications like *Spin* and *Rolling Stone*, and led to a series of show-openers for Beck, Jon Spencer, Rage Against the Machine, and Wu-Tang Clan.

In late 1998, Berlin-based Digital Hardcore Recordings inked a distribution for ATR's second full-length release with one of the largest media conglomerates in the U.S. – the Elektra Entertainment Group. At first glance, this seems to be the time-tested method of an underground band exploiting a corporate entity's vast resources and distribution power (i.e., the Sex Pistols) for its own gain. A closer examination seems to find an inherent conflict with this arrangement. While ATR does have full creative control and a fair royalty arrangement, doesn't the idea of making money for a huge corporate empire seem to conflict with the band's political and social interests?

Empire doesn't think so, and he explained how ATR uses any available outlet – large or small – to distribute their recordings. From the beginning, Empire set up his DHR label to document the burgeoning digital hardcore scene's artists and license the music to other labels. "We set up this label as a sort of protection, to protect us from the capitalist music business, when it comes down to creative freedom," said Empire.

The whole idea, according to Empire, is to go through all possible channels and reach as many people as possible, on their own terms. "The big difference is we don't make any compromises to reach more people. We go through all sorts of different channels. Even channels where there's no money. Basically, for us, the music business is the enemy and it doesn't really matter if it's Grand Royal, Elektra, or ADA... In differ-

ent countries, we have different set-ups. Some of these people might be a bit more cool than some others, but basically we are just using channels. We approach the media the same way."

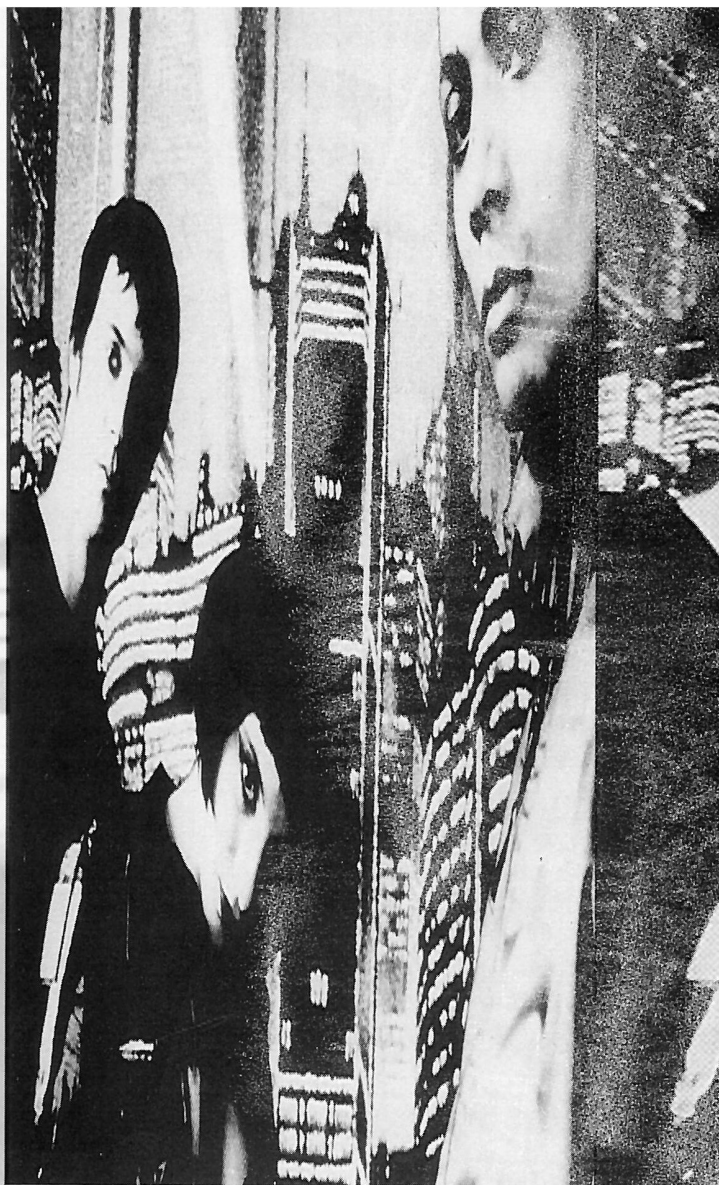
Empire said he is leery of the mass media because it is sometimes inseparable from the record labels and the corporations that own it. "The thing is, there is not one magazine I can agree with 100 percent. So, we said there is a choice of either doing no interviews or doing everything, because we know the information gets manipulated. But I think people should have the chance of finding out what [ATR] is about."

However, with the release of *60 Second Wipeout*, Empire said he reevaluated the band's goals and realigned his own thinking. "Capitalism has failed, we haven't failed as people," explained Empire. "It seems like a lot of people are not like the media describes them. Especially

young people." This realization seemed to supercharge Empire and the rest of ATR – including new member Nic Endo – into picking up where they had left off and infusing their noise with new revitalized energy. "It made us feel more optimistic, and we thought, now is the time to motivate all of these people for action and then something can really happen."

The band had shied away from using that one inflammatory, call-to-action word that many bands before have used – revolution. Whereas bands of the past have literally and figuratively subverted that magical word into their messages – from the Beatles to the late '70s punkers to psychedelic voyagers Spacemen 3 – ATR at first refused to be a part of that heritage.

Empire explained that in the past, "revolution" had been a meaningless, empty word to the band, and only recently have they come to embrace its possibilities. "The [new] record starts with that song 'Revolution Action.' We avoided that term... on all of the other records because it is nowadays connected to jokes or to cynicism... Hollywood and the mass media



really connected that term to something cynical. That destroyed the communication process that is absolutely necessary at the moment. I think revolution is a part of evolution."

This ongoing evolutionary process is quite evident on *60 Second Wipeout*. Though the noise level is as high as ever, and the breakbeats still smack you in the face, the production and songwriting are more refined and sophisticated. Said Empire, "We wanted to move away really from dance music or from anything that is connected to '90s music. It's more complex."

Adding to the new direction was newcomer Nic Endo, who had been part of the Berlin DHR scene for years and was initially brought into the fold to aid the band on stage. According to Empire, Endo's punk and noise rock background not only added to the new album's abrasiveness, but also to its newly found accessibility.

ATR initially developed its sonic aesthetic by mixing distorted jungle breakbeats, techno basslines and electronics, and sampled punk guitar riffs into bombastic anthems. The guitar riffs usually came from



obscure tracks from the likes of punkers Sham 69 or the Stooges, and added an element for the listener to hang on to among the techno damage.

This time around, those punked-out chord progressions were played by Empire himself who, in the process, forced a bit more of the traditional pop structure into the mix. "We wanted to develop that song structure in [older tracks like] 'Sick to Death' for example: we wanted to develop that further. ATR is always using certain elements of popular music... it is always there." Since Empire's first musical experience was playing in punk bands during the late '80s, (before he got into techno and DJ culture) the songwriting and guitar playing naturally make the music more accessible.

As the hardcore beat of "Revolution Action" jumpstarts the album, the roar of a crowd and white noise guitar is heard as Empire repeatedly screams "It's time to live and it's time to die." Empire's fuzzed-to-hell guitar riffs propel many of the songs; "By Any Means Necessary" and "Too Dead for Me" are as catchy as they are abrasive. "Digital Hardcore" veers toward the more experi-

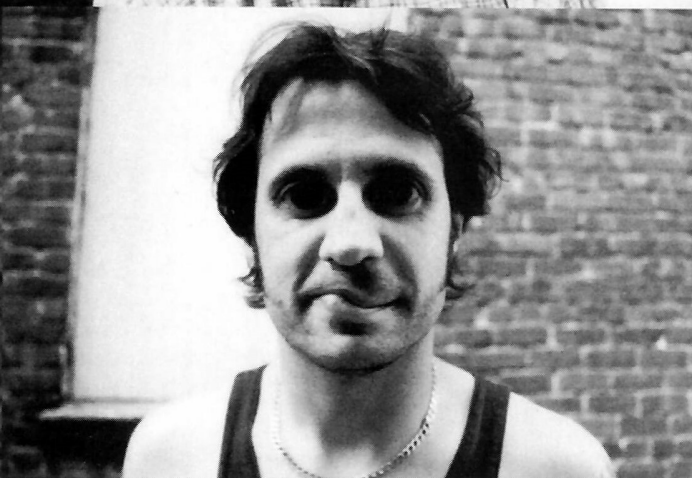
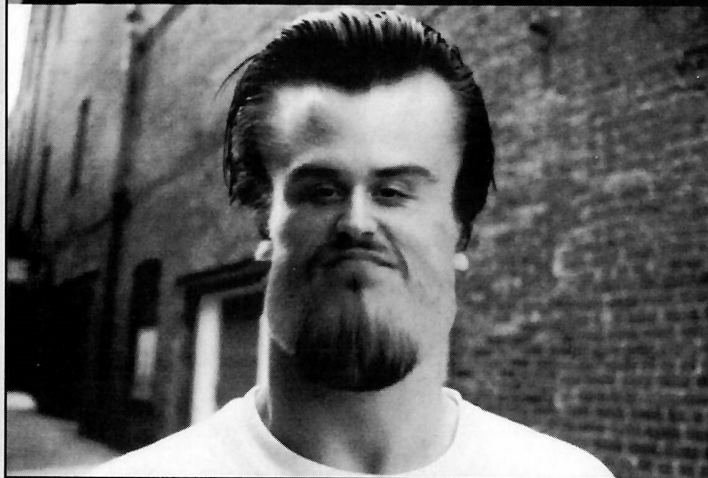
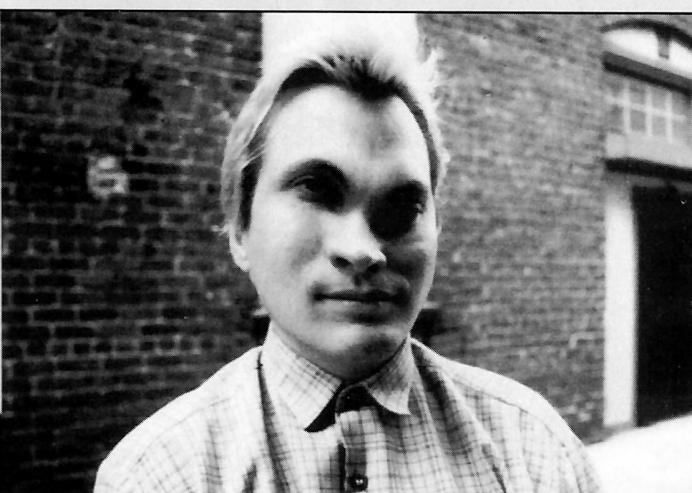
mental; recorded in ultra-stereo, the noise and extreme synthesizer blasts feel like they are hardwired into your brain.

The album also marks the first time the band has brought guest musicians into the studio to collaborate on songs. Empire wanted to make alliances with musicians who he felt ATR had something in common with. Among the chosen were D-stroy and Freestyle from the New York-based hip-hop collective The Arsonists ("Anarchy 99," "No Success" and "Your Uniform Does Not Impress Me"), Fear Factory's Dino Cazares ("Death of a President D.I.Y."), and ex-Bikini Kill vocalist Kathleen Hanna ("No Success"). Of course, *60 Second Wipeout* continues ATR's violent political insights and commentary. Empire says those who just sit there on the sidelines and say nothing about government oppression, racism, civil rights, and economic problems are the ones to really worry about. "You can't escape the responsibility [of being political]. If you're saying, 'Yeah, I'm non-political,' it means you're silent and you agree with what is going on."

However, Empire feels physical violence –

specifically, violence against governments, states or systems – should only be used as a last resort and is not an action ATR usually subscribes to. "I want to make sure that people don't compare us to that kind of action because basically, when we talk about violence or using violence against the state or the system, it is because the system doesn't leave us another option." Empire said. As an example, Empire said the band is more aligned with the "by any means necessary" philosophy of Malcolm X, rather than the more peaceful options of Martin Luther King, Jr., to promote change.

Right now, though, motivating audiences through their music to speak out against the world's problems is foremost on Empire's mind. With the new record's wide distribution and optimistic outlook, Empire feels once again ready to tour and spread the word. "This record is more like a positive record. We are totally attacking that structure... but it is down to us and the people to change it. Therefore, if we want to motivate as many people as possible, we have to try and make this music available to everybody." **J**



After spending an hour and a half watching the drear that is Queensrÿche live in '99, I quickly scooted over to the Fantomas' club gig here in Toronto at The Opera House (I

death metal jazz the band of the same name creates. Featuring Mike Patton from Faith No More and Mr. Bungle, Dave Lombardo from Slayer and Grip Inc., King Buzzo from the Melvins, and Mr.

light, or say it a different way. It's got nothing whatsoever in common with Mr. Bungle. It's very, very, very different. I mean, this music has no lyrics. I'm acting as pretty much another instrument, like a

FANTÔMAS

MUSIC'S SICK, BRIGHT FUTURE

By Martin Popoff

know, how cavalier: two concerts in one night). I must say, the contrasts were superspecialstaggering. The place was packed, the music beyond daring, eyeballs glued to the stage lest some slight sonic or visual nuance be missed. And this was for highly annoying music with no lyrics.

Fantomas was this sort of anti-hero who marauded through 32 French novels in the early 1900s. Known for putting sulfuric acid in perfume bottles, he also let loose diseased rats on a cruise ship. A fitting reference for the howling, mad,

Bungle bassist Trevor Dunn, the band have one highly unusual album out on Patton's own Ipecac label, plus one highly amazed fanbase, judging from the looks on faces after the band's terror-filled stop in Toronto.

Patton lays down the law. "No real grand scheme. I guess I started writing this stuff because I grew up listening to hardcore and death metal, that kind of stuff, and still have a little bit of it left inside that needed to escape. And I've been through a lot since those days, so I thought I'd try and put it under a new

second guitar or something. There's a lot of weird trading between me and the band. A lot of it sounds like a total mess, but it's all scripted down to the bone. It's pretty extreme stuff. It's not for everybody. I would say Mr. Bungle is probably a little easier to listen to. Some people disagree with that. This just uses its own language. It uses a lot of metal and punk cliches, but I try to organize them in a specific way that might provoke people a little bit more."

Sounds like the musical equivalent of full-on schizophrenia, no? "It makes

missing a beat. "I always want to make a record that I would walk into the record store and buy and enjoy. As far as it being insane, a lot of people tell me that. But I will admit that it's organized in a way that's not logical — it's not verses and choruses, it's not what people are used to hearing as songs. It's more like little vignettes, a bunch of pieces that work together as a whole. You have to write it down to remember it. Each guy kind of has his own way of tricking his mind into remembering it. It's a pain in the ass to play, it really is. You always have to be thinking. There's no chance to be, like, eyeing girls in the crowd, or working on your dance moves, because it's a fucking pain to play (laughs)."

Dave Lombardo has always taken to challenges. The man had to leave Slayer because they didn't write records fast enough (as in often: velocity was never a problem). Take his Vivaldi project. Take his recent collaborations with Fred Frith, Bill Laswell and John Zorn. Take Grip Inc., although maybe that isn't too extraordinary, perhaps accounting for

Lombardo's impatience and evasiveness when discussing the band.

"I got tired of being classified as just a heavy metal drummer," explains Dave, better known as the Human Drum Tornado. "I feel that my taste in music and my ability to play and express my drumming into other styles of music, it's all much more than I was allowed to play. So to break away and be able to do

With this, we'll go from very hardcore, into something bluesy, into something else, and then Mike will sing a whole different other style. It's more based around his vocals, because he's amazing. He can sing anything, like I can probably play anything, you know? So that kind of works out really nice. There's absolutely nobody out there who can even touch this. This is by far the newest — if you want to call it that — music style. It's definitely not mainstream. You have to get used to it. You don't know what to expect next, and when you get a little bit of it, you're going to want more of it, because we're going to change it."

And with that, I had to dash off to interview Geoff Tate from Queensrÿche, also apologizing for having to catch some of his set before trotting back across town to witness Fantomas. Mike wasn't impressed, offering with a knowing wink, "You don't need to see them live. Don't, and say you did." Sage advice indeed, given what went down in the wee hours at The Opera House. **J**

KNOWN FOR PUTTING SULFURIC ACID IN PERFUME BOTTLES, [FANTOMAS] ALSO LET LOOSE DISEASED RATS ON A CRUISE SHIP. A FITTING REFERENCE FOR THE HOWLING, MAD, DEATH METAL JAZZ THE BAND OF THE SAME NAME CREATES.

these other projects has helped me show people a little more of what I am."

And Fantomas? "It's very exciting. It's intense at times; it leaves you hanging and wanting for more, but when it gets you, it hits you really hard and then drops you. It'll take you on these ups and downs you'll never experience in any other kind of music. Like, once you go into a Grip Inc. show, it's just full volume, everything turned up, bam bam bam!

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ADD N TO (X)

OUT WITH THE OLD GUARD IN WITH AVANT HARD

ANNE SHENTON

BARRY SMITH

STEVE CLAYDON

By Daniel Fuller

London-based noise-rock trio **Add N to (X)** may have come up with the definitive term for an emerging genre when they coined the phrase "avant hard." Not only does the phrase bring to mind an audible fusion of raw electronic textures and avant-garde inspiration with rock 'n' roll antagonism, but it's also the title for the trio's second full-length recording, which bandmember Anne Shenton described as what you might get if you threw the works of 20th-century composer Karlheinz Stockhausen, Black Sabbath, and Motörhead into a particle accelerator.

Shenton, Barry Smith, and Steve Claydon (plus an assortment of timekeepers, including Stereolab's Andy Ramsay and drummer Rob Allum of the High Llamas) fuse futuristic concepts and an arsenal of analog synths to produce a visceral compound of organic and technological elements. That arsenal includes an alphabet soup of machines with

names such as ARP 2600, EMS Synthesizer-AKS, EDP Wasp, various Moog models (including the Rogue), and the Korg MS-10. Though stoic German electronic musicians Kraftwerk pioneered this man-machine nearly three decades earlier, never before has its presentation been so gritty, so physical.

As a result, Add N to (X) thrive on the philosophy that the use of technology – not the technology itself – defines artistic and even societal progress. Accordingly, their name refers to a line of computer code they lifted from an '80s software manual. They felt that the code – an equation that represents the adding of two unknowns to produce a third, unquantified product – fit their desire to make music using perfect machines operated by imperfect humans.

The band's history is as unorthodox as their aesthetic. Shenton met Smith in the mid-'90s at We Are Electric, a London club where Smith did time as a DJ. Smith often brought his small collection of analog synths to add texture and animation to the mix, turning a standard DJ set into more of an interactive performance. "I got to know Barry's records before I got to know him," recalled Shenton. "It wasn't a dance club; it was a club where people could come along and just experience noise, really. Things that shouldn't be together, things that were kind of maybe clashing in some way."

The two became friends and realized they both had an affinity for the spirit of early electronic music and the use of juxtaposition – the combining of ideas, sounds, and melodies that, at first, don't seem to fit. The duo soon began producing their own tracks.

By 1995, Add N to (X) enlisted Claydon to join the lineup. Their music began to evolve into an unlikely blend of early-industrial electro-pop and Pierre Henry, an early French synth pioneer who used Moogs for his lounge and pop music stylings.





After the success of their 1996 debut, *Vero Electronics* (Blow Up), Mute picked them up and released *On the Wires of Our Nerves*. *Avant Hard* followed during a time when Add N to (X) still find themselves discussing the '90's "analog revolution."

The recent surge in popularity of early analog synthesizers began in the '80s, when relatively affordable and then-new digital synthesizers stole the market from their analog ancestors. Up to then, programming a synth consisted of touching dozens of knobs, sliders, and switches. These actions generally caused the oper-

ator to become familiar with how to produce these sounds. Digital technology made it possible for sounds to be stored in memory, allowing most instruments to come with an selection of preset sounds.

This introduction of commercially available digital synthesizers – most notably, the Yamaha DX7 – led to a decade of sterile sounds, clinical production techniques, and high-technology overload. In 1983 the DX7 was introduced. It was the first widely-available, programmable digital synthesizer with a Music Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) – an operating system that allows elec-

tronic instruments and computers to interact. Though it could produce many of its own interesting textures, the DX7 didn't have the sound or accessibility of an analog machine.

Many other synth manufacturers jumped on the digital bandwagon and stopped producing analog gear. Bands dumped their analog gear by the boatload to try out the new technology, making those analog synths easy to find and very cheap. By the early '90s, analogs were again dragged out and dusted off by iconoclastic synth aficionados such as the future members

of Add N To (X). "We found them really cheaply and nobody really wanted them anymore because they wanted all the really new digital synthesizers," recalls Smith. "[Analog] synthesizers have this dirtiness. They sweat. They sound sexual. They're nasty and really beautiful at the same time... So that was the original sort of appeal because we had listened to a lot of early electronic music and stuff and then when we found these things, they made the same sort of sounds."

Those sounds – the buzzing strings, deep bass drones, sparkling filter sweeps, piercing lead lines and wildly modulating effects – while detailed in texture, aren't that complex to produce yourself the first time out according to Smith. "It's wonderful if you don't know that process because you just come across so many wonderful, wonderful sounds. And then it sort of seemed to us that analog synthesis – in terms of the actual sounds that it made – was incredibly complicated. But at the same time, as machines, they were very, very dumb. Each one has its own sort of strange characteristics, they've got their own sort of... almost like a personality."

Add N to (X) have been known to destroy their hard-to-replace vintage

people say, 'Oh you're using analog synthesizers, therefore you're RETRO.' It's just like, what the fuck do you mean? [Analog] synthesizers never really went that far in the first place. [Popular music] was always controlled by the guitar. It's just like, what about the fucking guitar? That is the most retro instrument you could possibly have. It's been around for years!"

Since many guitarists process their instrument through a battery of effects pedals and audio gear, Smith doesn't see the difference between triggering a note via a guitar string or a keyboard. "What the fuck is a flanger or a fuzz box? They're synthesizers!"

Accordingly, the knob turning continues on *Avant Hard*. The band's setup of three synth players, a human drummer, and various drum machines allows flexible and seemingly unlimited sonic possibilities. Shenton said the band works together by coming up with elements that at first don't seem like they would work well together. "That's what we tried to do on this last album, juxtapose sort of quiet melodic structures against analog-sort-of-terror."

Those combinations land Add N to (X) in some fairly uncharted territory. The tracks "Robot New York" and "FYUZ" have an aggressive, noisy approach that brings to

we'd been working on this song ['Metal Fingers In My Body']... Then we opened up this old '60s porn magazine, and there was a picture of this robot in bed with a woman. And we thought, this is absolutely perfect."

The band drew on that image (as well as the concept from the 1977 film *Demon Seed*, in which mad computer Proteus IV rapes the wife of his creator in order to create a cyberorganism) to come up with an idea for a campy, but erotic, porno cartoon depicting a woman who orders a robot sex partner.

As luck with have it, Add N to (X) knew a London artist who they thought would be perfectly suited for this project. "We knew a woman whose animation style was very similar to the illustration that we got. So we asked her to do it [the video] and then we wrote the storyline and directed it. The idea was basically: cartoons impart such anarchic forms of information. If you watch the *Simpsons* or *Tom and Jerry*, or any of those things, they deal with incredibly dark subjects."

The video is a humorous look at the one thing that separates machines and robots from their human creators – sex and sexuality – something that Smith doesn't take for granted. "It's [sex] the only thing left to us as human beings that machines have no



machines on-stage. However, this is not about smashing gear for heightened visual impact, à la Pete Townshend or Nine Inch Nails. Quite simply, Add N to (X) get extremely physical on stage and take their man-machine aesthetic to the limit during their performances. "Sometimes when you give these things a good smashing up, they sound better," Smith explained. Finding replacement gear can be a problem, but Smith feels that the element of a show just about to fall apart due to failing gear adds to the music's intensity. "You have to sacrifice these things. You can't be precious... we're not like a roving analog museum."

Although Add N to (X) use what some may consider to be low-technology, they aren't trying to emulate the past. Calling themselves "aggressive futurists," they believe that because technology has been in development since the beginning of time – fire, pulleys, wheels, vacuum cleaners, elevators, computers, motor vehicles, etc. – there is no distinction between the old and new. The only distinction is how you actually use the technology itself. With that being said, though, don't even think of tagging them as "retro," a subject Smith quickly puts to rest.

"It really sort of gets on my nerves when

mind the conflicting images of an amped-up Kraftwerk driving through Detroit in a DeLorean at maximum speed. Bouncy, jazz-like drum fills and extreme analog waveform bending transform "Skills" into a soundtrack for a psychedelic lounge in outer space. The sustained, pulsating minor-key bassline of the ominous "Revenge of the Black Regent" – a sequel to the last album's "Black Regent" – is worth the admission price alone.

However, the single for "Metal Fingers in My Body" and its subsequent animated video truly unite sound with image. The footage takes its cues from the track's over-driven Moogs, syncopated drumming, and the repeated Vocoder phrase "Metal Fingers in My Body." However, the video's campy porn content is definitely not an outtake from *The Jetsons*.

Like seemingly all good things, Smith said the creative development of the video stemmed from something that happened late one night. "We found – at 3:00 in the morning in Brussels – a huge pile of old electronic magazines in the street and they were next to a huge pile of *Playboy* magazines. We thought this was quite funny... we were destined to find these things in the street. So we got them back to the bus and

real interaction with. Sexuality is very human, and sex can kill the machine." Don't expect the fairly graphic cartoon to be shown on any sort of American MTV rotation, though European MTV apparently has no problem with it.

Add N to (X) recently performed in Germany for a series of dates. Smith said that within the electronic music genre, there are separations and conflicting philosophies. "Munich, Frankfurt, and Dusseldorf are Kraftwerk cities, whereas Berlin and Hamburg are much more an Alec Empire/digital hardcore/jungle type of thing." (Incidentally, Atari Teenage Riot's Empire have released music through Smith's record label in London and had come to Add N to (X)'s gig the night before in Berlin.)

Fortunately, Add N to (X) are not that easily defined. They are, as their namesake's equation states, a resulting third unknown variable. Add N to (X) are about juxtapositions and dissecting what constitutes music and how it is made. As Shenton herself noted, "You just have these two things together – a melody and a noise – and it's like, 'Do they fit? Why don't they fit? Who says they don't fit?'" Add N to (X) think they do. **J**

porn king matt

zane's

sexual

society

By Mr. Dark

I strode out to the car with a fistful of porn and a CD packed with hard, fast, and angry fucking music supplied by Matt Zane, son of legendary blue-movie mogul Chuck Zane. With said goodies in hand, I proceeded to a local bar to meet up with my blue-movie buddy, a hard-bodied lady with a taste for things aggressive. I figured she'd dig the resume of the 26-year-old director who has combined the worlds of porn videos and rock music – a rowdy marriage of delightful convenience.

As lead singer of techno-core band Society 1, the young Zane has been looking to cross-over into the mainstream music market with his pseudo-spiritual preachings of desire and social freedom, in the process painting a 21st-century cyber-portrait of himself as the "Slacker Jesus" on the CD of the same name. One might suggest that Zane strives to represent himself as a martyr for the cause of rock'n'roll excess, but even his lust for life has caused him to choose it over death. This is a curious chink in the armor of the balls-out knight who calls himself "the rock'n'roll porn king."

Born in Rochester, New York, in 1974, Zane showed early signs of a creative drive when he began making videos at age 10. "I can't remember what a lot of those were like; they were very experimental," he says from his homebase in Los Angeles. "I'd make actual soundtracks for them on my little keyboards in the basement." The equipment came courtesy

of his dad, who was already making waves with his hardcore fuckfests. Annual police raids on the house and images of his father being arrested on local newscasts are strong memories for Zane, who was recruited early on to compose soundtracks for his father's films. "I couldn't see them or go to the sets," he says, sounding a little disappointed. Fairly bursting with creative juices, Zane threw himself into his own craft with vigor, teaching himself how to play guitar and bass. "I got really interested in the alternative aspects of people. I started making these little movies cut between two VCRs. One of the last ones I did before I actually got into adult movies was called *The Contrasting Views of People Living Within An Artistic Lifestyle*," he laughs. (That's a far cry from *Cherry Poppers Summer Vacation*, one of the 80-plus porn features he would eventually create.)

Chuck Zane moved to the City of Angels in 1991. His son followed a year later and immediately began working in the San Fernando Valley warehouse that was home to his father's growing empire. Jobs ranged from stocking and tape duplication to sales and shipping. It helped pay the bills and allowed him to afford admission to Musician's Institute of Technology in

Los Angeles, despite his having dropped out of high school. "I kinda lied to get in there," he says quietly. "I don't think it really would have made a difference, 'cause they would take you if you could pay the tuition." The guitar instruction greatly improved his musical skills, and he soon formed Habitual Buzz, a band that remained together for two years.

As the band gigs failed to generate the type of cash flow he was expecting, Zane soon discovered how tough L.A. really was. His morale began to flag until the day his father called him into his office and offered up a directing gig.

"I was starving," Zane said. "I couldn't get off the ground musically. The town was killing me." Zane said he figured, "What the hell," and shadowed porn master John T. Bone for weeks, taking notes and soaking in the basics of production. His first film, *Repression*, debuted in January 1997, and he quickly began to develop his signature style — surrealistic vignettes, dramatic angles and lighting, eye-popping gang-bangs, and fist-pumping rock soundtracks.

Backstage Sluts, one of the films in my sexual care package, features popular porn stars Holli Woods, Alyssa Love, and Julie Rage and a host of other extreme

hotties as band groupies who'll do anything to get a backstage pass. Nellie Pierce allows herself to be violently fucked by a roadie as he single-handedly trashes a motel room, while Jacklyn Lick is asked to straddle a couch as the road manager of Insane Clown Posse pelts her with lunch meat. The video also features personal accounts of bandmembers and roadies who have experienced supreme sexual hijinx, some of which are colorfully recreated for your whacking pleasure.

Sexual Society II: Push It Through is a cockumentary about Society 1 on tour in support of the *Slacker Jesus* CD. Glimpses of the band onstage are sandwiched together with gratuitous fucking that includes a surprise visit from the Kevin Bacon of porn: Ron Jeremy, who supplies two freaky women and the supplies necessary to turn them both into human ice-cream sundaes. Zane and Jeremy then proceed to "eat" them while the rest of the band watches.

Upon slipping the first of these videos into the player, my lady friend caught the opening visuals and immediately covered her eyes. I guess she wasn't as hardcore as I thought.

A huge fan of The Doors and Frank Zappa, Zane cites Jane's Addiction as a major influence in the type of music he writes. Society 1 is sort of like Nine Inch Nailed Korn with a smattering of Manson around the edges. The music whirls and churns angrily with Zane chanting, whispering, and screaming Cookie Monster-style through a bullhorn: "THINKING IS THE LINK! THINKING IS THE LINK!"

i don't
believe in
censorship
whatsoever.
i think that it
should be just
as open as it
is in germany.
- zane



More anti-authority than anti-Christ, the message of the CD is "accept me or free me." Though the message isn't terribly new or unique, songs like "Struggle Free" and "Thinking Is the Link" encourage 20-somethings to fight against a homogenized American ideal. In a hidden track, Zane intones, "We must believe in desire, we must believe in lust."

In equating monogamy with authority, Zane is the very model of a modern social anarchist. "I don't believe in censorship whatsoever. I think that it should be just as open as it is in Germany," he says. "It's the First Amendment, I just don't know why we can't follow it. It doesn't cause any problems in those countries over there, being able to show all kinds of sex tapes." A recent meet-and-marketing trip to the Cannes Film Festival greatly reinforced his indignation. "The first week I get back to America, I feel like I'm in a prison."

On the cover of the album, Zane's birthdate floats next to a cross made of televisions and I have to ask if he is truly representing himself as a martyr for the cause of pornography and the pleasures

of rock'n'roll. "Slacker Jesus is an alter-ego that was created in the album as a martyr for the things you mentioned," he says. "They always talk about the new millennium, of a Christ figure coming down, and I thought it would be neat to base a character on me, call him the Slacker Jesus that would come down and kinda lead people toward a more hedonistic, desire-driven lifestyle." That lifestyle led to a scare not too long ago when Zane's

broadcast live over the Internet. "Three or four hundred people will be there. We rented out a big house that's three acres and a stage — it's got an indoor pool," he says, his words coming quicker as he pitches the event. "Four cameras going live over the Internet, being shot into space. It's gonna be a real intense show with live orgies with 10 or 13 people."

Society 1 will be providing live music and using the show as a springboard for

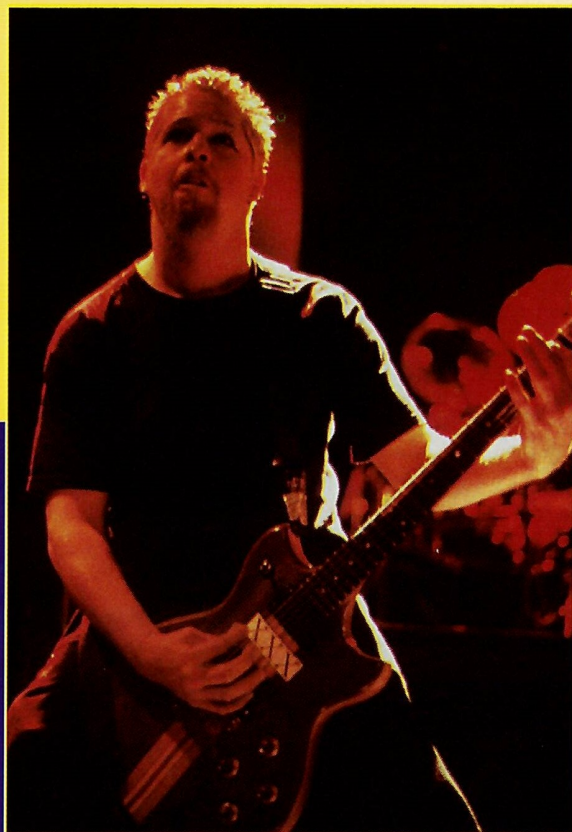
i thought it would be neat to base a character on me, call him the slacker jesus that would come down and kinda lead people toward a more hedonistic, desire-driven lifestyle.

then-girlfriend, Kristen, tested positive for HIV. It proved to be a false alarm, and Zane himself tested negative. "It really had a big influence over my decision to go condom-only, not only in my private life at all times, but also within my movies." Fun and fancy free — to a point. Even hedonists carry some responsibility on their shoulders, or at least in their nether regions.

Zane is excited about his latest production, *House Of Flesh 3*. The previous two were private sex parties that were filmed and released, but this one is special; it will be

another round of touring dates. Zane is optimistic that the younger porn-viewing public understand his mission and will support his work. Whether or not he'll have *Sexual Society* videos in Blockbuster anytime soon is another thing altogether.

But don't tell Zane that. "If you can steady yourself and focus without all the extraneous thought running around your head, you could just pretty much find direction in anything — if you just stop and think."



The members of Society 1, from left: Justin Reynolds, Matt Zane, Devon Norris, and Jamé Potter

Crowbar are certainly a well-respected New Orleans institution, creepy-crawling from the heat through ten years and seven albums on the scene, having arrived here in the year of our Lord 2000 with a new record called *Equilibrium*, which, along with '97's *Odd Fellows Rest*, ranks among the multi-dimensional best of the band's deliberate and doomy career.

Kirk is the king of *Nola* catharsis, pounding out tales of weakness and

example, we have a lot more aggressive songs; they had more doom and psychedelia. We toured with Cathedral, and I'm a big fan. But they really weren't an influence because we started doing something similar to what they were doing at the same time. We just didn't know about them and they didn't know about us. We all started at the same time, doing the same sludgy, drop-tuned thing.

"It took me a little while at first to get into this

CROWBAR

Medieval Swamp Tones For Manic Depressives?

by Martin Popoff

despair flamethrown into redemption with purifying power chords. Musically, the band has evolved from the original premise of anti-heroic "slow thrash" through more of a slow hardcore sound, into its current state, an interesting blend between the base sound and a "note-dense" form of doom, à la Cathedral, Candlemass, or perhaps Chicago legends, Trouble.

Kirks agrees on the latter. "Trouble has a big influence on us, especially early on, and they're still definitely there for us. The new album's got that heavy, dark, Gothic sound to it. But taking Trouble as an

record," Kirk muses. "I loved it, then I hated it, and then I loved it again. I had a listen to it for the first time in a while last night, and I'm really happy with it. There are only about two or three songs anywhere on this that have any riffs that sound even close to hardcore. But the thing is, going back to the *Obedience Through Suffering* record, our first one, there is no hardcore whatsoever. It's all heavily Trouble-influenced — Sabbath and Trouble. (For a while, for whatever reason, we did go a little bit in a hardcore direction.) There's a really good Sabbath vibe to the new one. I would say our

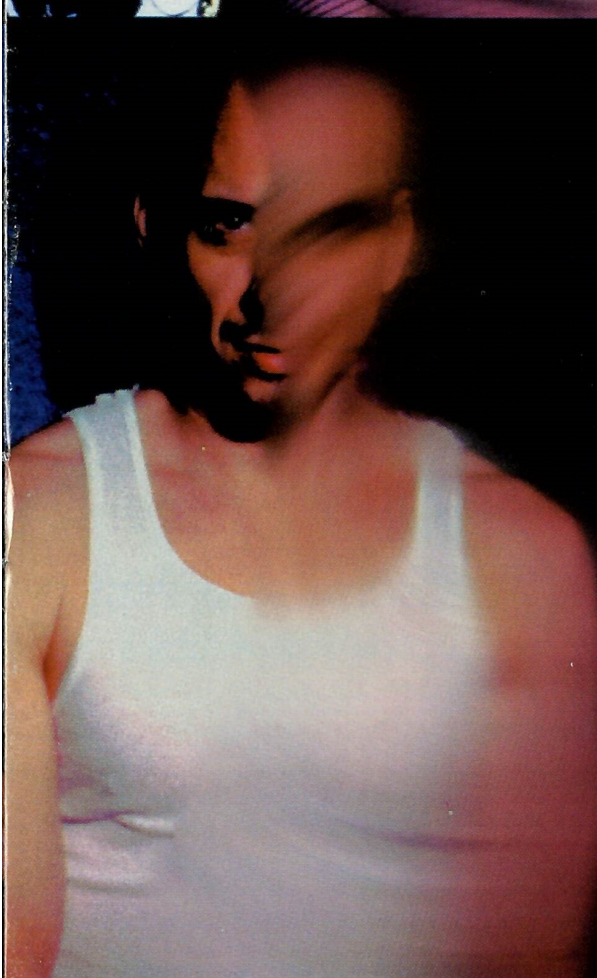




riffs have more notes to them now. They're more riffed-up, if you want to put it that way. In the beginning, our stuff was intentionally simple. We were trying to go to the other extreme from all the technical thrash that was coming

now feeling much more a part of the band, having been the fresh recruit on *Odd Fellows Rest*. "[Recording] this one was a little bit more relaxed than the last one. When *Odd Fellows Rest* was being recorded, I was the new

"It took me a little while at first to get into this record," Kirk muses. "I loved it, then I hated it, and then I loved it again."



out."

Lyrically, Kirk, as usual, stabs right to the heart of emotional trauma, although it's fortunately trauma that can be quashed through positive, affirming self-direction. "A lot of songs on the album have a spiritual overtone, not necessarily with God or anything, just your own struggle within your mind and body. And a lot of it touches on drugs and alcohol, not just necessarily from or about me, but friends and stuff, how they've coped with it and moved on — like 'Glass Full Of Liquid Pain.' Plus there's failed relationship stuff and a track called 'Command Of Myself' which is really about persevering. I'm saying: I still have a fire to do this and I want it to continue."

Swamp-dwelling Sammy, of Acid Bath notoriety, is

guy and hadn't really done many shows with them. I was kind of nervous. I hadn't actually gotten to know the serious, personal side of everyone. Whereas with this one, we'd gone through a year of touring and getting to know each other really well. Everyone is different from each other. Personality-wise, Big T's kind of quiet, just chills out, kind of watches everything that goes on around him. Kirk likes to party, likes to have a good time. Sid, the new drummer — how can I put this — he's definitely his own entity, the most unique person I've ever met in my life. He's just out there..."

The influence of Sammy's Acid Bath can also be heard on *Equilibrium*: a slight elevation of complication, coupled with a foreboding sense of



...the band's cover of Gary Wright's "Dream Weaver," rendered in a mindless lurch that sounds like an extended Type O smear. "It was just a drunken mess-around," offers Sammy with a chuckle.

misfortune built into his reclusive rifery. This is a Crowbar that sounds deadly serious.

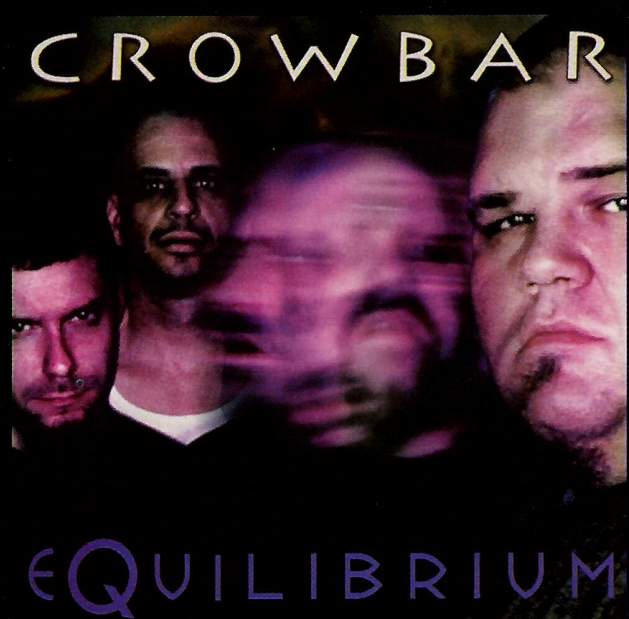
Except when it comes to the band's cover of Gary Wright's "Dream Weaver," rendered in a mindless lurch that sounds like an extended Type O smear. "It was just a drunken mess-around," offers Sammy with a chuckle. "A really laid-back situation at the studio. Everybody was burned-out and a bit drunk, and we said 'screw it, let's just do something crazy.' It was just one of those moments, you know?"

Watch for Crowbar to tour their wide loads off with this record, as always, the road being home to the band, and likely countless years ahead. And just when you're not paying attention, look for another Down record to drop. "Right before we left for this past tour with SOD, we'd talked about that quite a bit," reveals

Kirk. "Phil [Anselmo] was kind of negotiating everything. We did a one-off deal with Elektra for the last record,

and we want to do the same thing this time. We have about ten songs worth of riffs on tape – very, very rough. It definitely needs work, but we have a decent amount of stuff written. It's really similar to the last one. It's got a kind of '70s overtone to it. It's a lot more rock-'n'roll, if you want to call it that, compared to Pantera or Crowbar. If anything, Down was always closer in my eyes to what Corrosion of Conformity was doing on the last few

records. But it's still going in the same direction, although we'll try to beef it up a little." **J**



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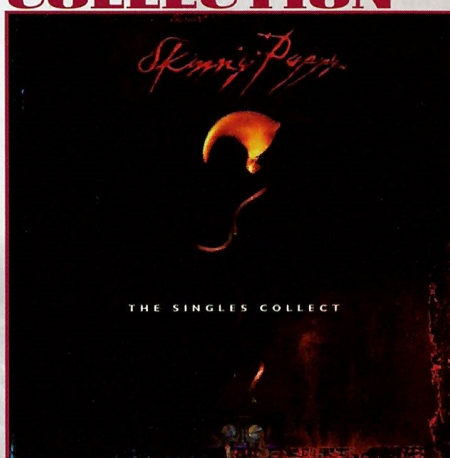
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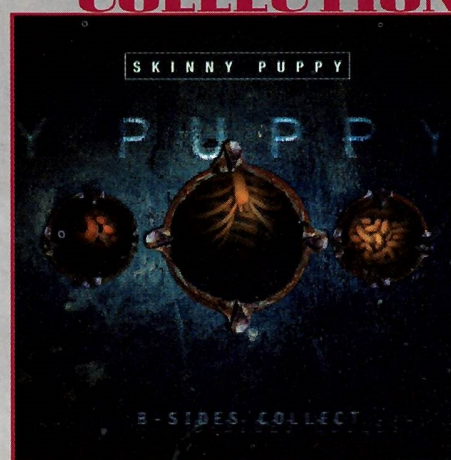


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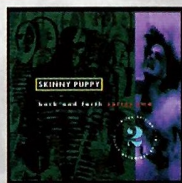
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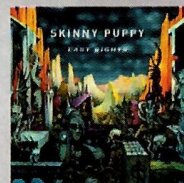
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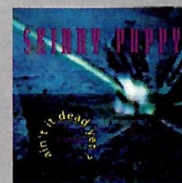
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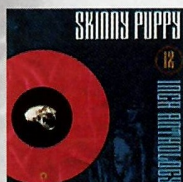
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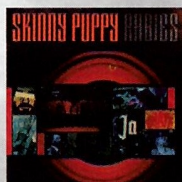
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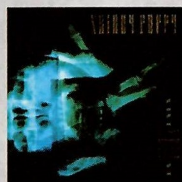
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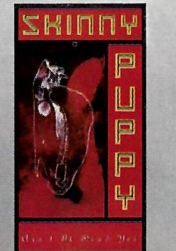
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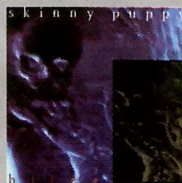
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Hailing from London, Ontario, the four felines of **Kittie** have made a lot of ruckus in a little time. I caught up with them via cell phone — me in the comfort of my own pig sty (ahem, home), them in a Winnebago somewhere in Iowa. While I wasn't able to speak to the drummer, Mercedes Lander, because she had to do a radio interview, I spoke with the other Kitties about how they got together, what happened with original bassist Tanya Candler, and why (for a change) Black Sabbath is not an influence.

Come pet with me...

Interview with Morgan Lander (vocals/guitar):

Please introduce the Kitties...

I'm Morgan, I play guitar and sing. Fallon plays guitar and sings as well. Talena plays bass, and Mercedes plays drums.

How'd it all come together?

Mercedes and Fallon met four or five years ago, in gymnastics class. Mercedes had just gotten her drum set and Fallon had just gotten her guitar, and they started talking about music and the stuff they liked, and they decided to go down to the basement and start jamming. The story goes that they had another girl jamming with them, singing and playing guitar, but she moved to Europe. Or something to that effect. And I was kind of an obvious choice as a replacement, seeing as Mercedes and I are sisters.

Are you older or younger?

Older.

Had you ever sung before?

Um, no...

What kind of stuff did you play when you first started?

It was a lot of covers at first, but we started writing a lot of our own material, some of which actually made it onto *Spit*. So some of the songs on this record are, like, three years old.

How long did the band exist before you joined?

(Calling over her shoulder to the rest of the band) How long did the band exist before I started jamming with you guys? Fallon says four or five months.

So the band really hadn't become Kittie yet...

No, we had a million names and it wasn't full-force yet. But the founding members were all there. Well, after we got a bass player. Fallon had a friend from school who played bass, so she came over and we jammed. About four months after getting a bass player, we played our first show, a battle of the bands. About a month before the show, we sat down and filled out the application for it, and that's when we finally chose the name. We wanted something that was kinda contradictory to the music style we played. By that point, we'd already chosen the genre and the style... When we first started, we were in a higher tuning, but when we started writing our own material, it got harder and heavier. I'm sure there's still plenty of room for more progression in that respect.

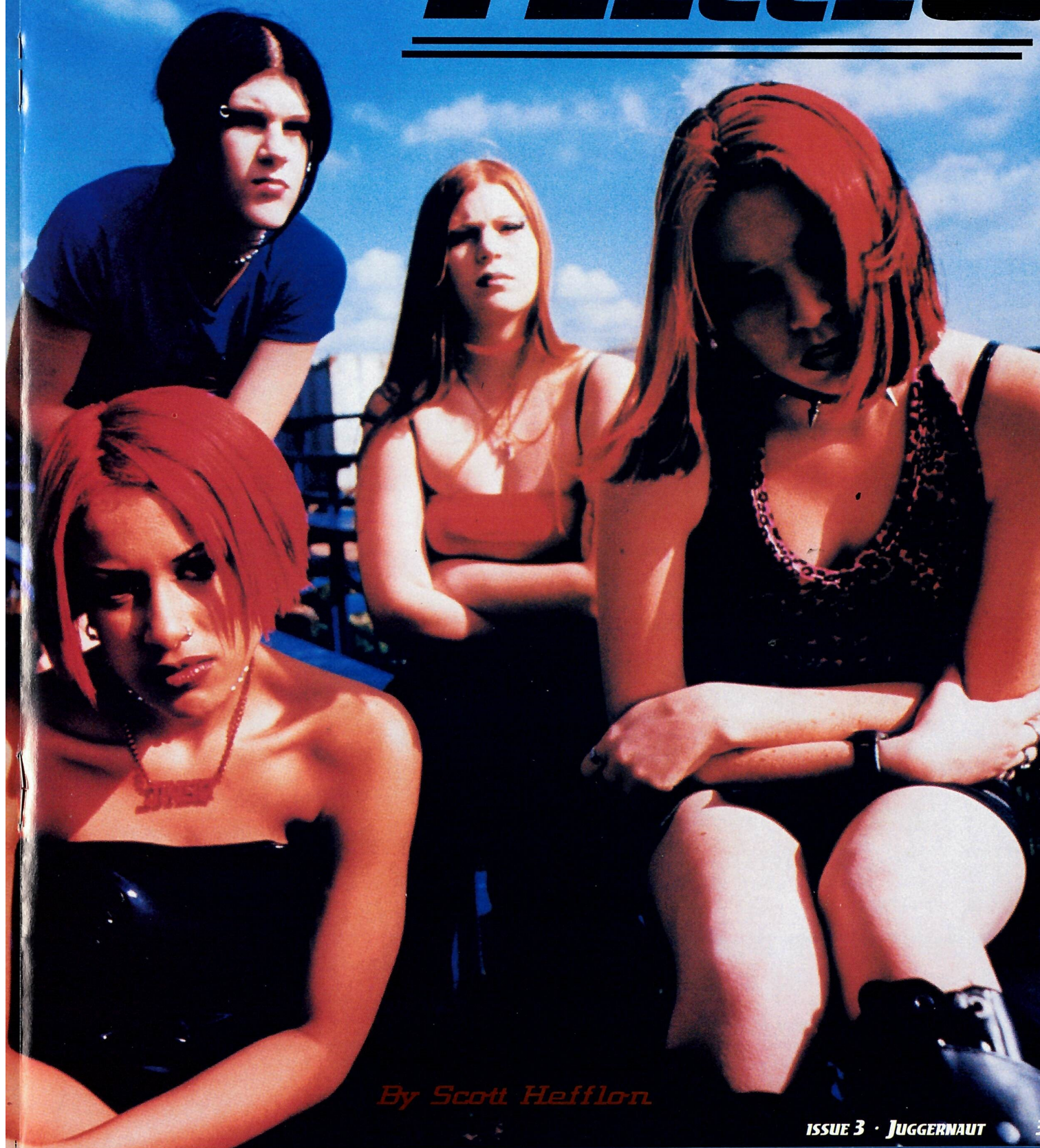
What's the area you're from like? Were there a lot of clubs for you to play?

We're from London, Ontario, Canada — about 300,000 people, about two hours south of Toronto — but it's not like it's any major center or anything. There

From bottom:
Fallon Bowe
Morgan Lander
Mercedes Lander
Talena

om left:
yman,
nder,
lander,

Kittie



By Scott Hefflon

ISSUE 3 · JUGGERNAUT

were only two clubs we ever got gigs at, and we spent our time going back and forth between the two. Our first show was at Call The Office.

Did you ever play at high schools, parties, dances, or roller rinks?

We never played any parties, but we played a high school battle of the bands once, and we got booted off the stage. **For what?**

Playing too loud was the official reason, but I think it was more for, well, not really *vulgarity*, but the principal didn't think women should be doing such things. Whatever the reason, we got booted off the stage after one

for 15-20 people... I was shaking the entire time. Being in front of a crowd takes a lot of practice, a lot of getting used to. Now we're playing in front of one or two thousand people, on this tour with Slipknot...

One of the differences is that many people are coming to see you now, as opposed to going to a battle of the bands just to see what's out there.

There are definitely people who show up not knowing who we are, but I'd say 99.9% of the response has been really good. I'm really grateful for the chance to do all this.

Your bio is quite aggressive, talking

so many great artists out there; if we were to idolize or imitate anyone, it just wouldn't be Kittie anymore. There are bands and artists who we admire very much, but we want to do our own thing.

Who inspired you to become a singer?

Truthfully, I was *elected* to be the singer. It's not like I grew up wanting to be a metal singer... We got together, we jammed, and I was chosen to sing. And at first, it was really rough.

Have you taken any voice lessons?

I took four, but I couldn't handle it so I quit. I think untrained voices are more beautiful and expressive anyway.



How was the crowd response?

Good. A lot of our friends were there to support us, and the people who didn't know us seemed to get into it, despite the fact we only got to play one song. I think they cheered us on partly because we were brave enough to get up there... That was, like, our second show, but we don't count it because we didn't really get to play. **It may be kinda hard to remember your exact feelings at the time, but you mentioned "courage" -- were you all really nervous about getting on stage?**

I've never been a flamboyant, outgoing show-off, the kind of person who feels comfortable in front of a crowd. It took a lot of courage for us to get on stage the first time, and that was only

obstacles, are things leveling off a little bit?

Well, we've gotten accepted in a primarily male-dominated genre of music, so that alone is a feat. As far as obstacles, I think we've done most of what we set out to do. But there's always room to grow and improve... One thing left is for people to consider us a metal band, not an all-girl metal band.

Do you think that'll happen in your lifetime?

It's a dream of mine, and something I'd like to work toward.

When you began, who were your inspirations? Did you look toward female artists more than male artists?

We try not to idolize anyone. We want to blaze our own trail. There are

Back in the day when we did one show a month or something, I'd be really hoarse afterwards, but I practice screaming my head off every day now. **Oh, you're a joy to hang around with...**

Yeah, right? But it's built my stamina up. I drink a lot of hot water. If there's tea, I'll drink that, but otherwise, I'll drink hot water. Yeah, it's kind of gross...

You're side-stepping my question of singers who influenced your style.

There are a lot of great singers — guys who can scream, girls who can scream... I listen to all sorts of stuff: Hole, Placebo, Cradle of Filth... It's not that we copy these or any other bands, but we're influenced by the music, the vocals, or a little something from a wide variety of bands, then we meld all the influences together.

Is this tour with Slipknot your first ever?

No, we had a mini-tour over the summer with Skinlab and Pissing Razors. It was a test to see if we could handle touring and if we enjoyed it, and it went really well. We'd never played night after night before, and we'd never really traveled. It's really cool because you see new faces in a new place every day — it's like an adventure every day. But we don't get a lot of free time to explore. Like we've been to New York about eight times because our label is there, but I've still never seen the State of Liberty. But when we go to Florida, we'll be driving straight through, and then we'll have two days off. I think we're going bowling with Will Haven, and later to the beach.

Where is this tour going?

It started in Davenport, Iowa, on January 7th, and we're ending in Montreal, Canada, on January 29th. Actually, I have the list right here... It goes: Davenport, St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield, Oklahoma City — that's where we are now, and then we have two days off — then Lake Bordivista, Tampa, Ft. Lauderdale, Atlanta, Raleigh, Winston-Salem, North Myrtle Beach, Virginia Beach, Washington D.C., Pittsburgh, London, Ontario hometown show, then Toronto, and Montreal. It's about 20 shows. We're visiting places we've never been before — like, I've always wanted to go to Florida. It's was a childhood dream to see Mickey Mouse at Disney World. **Tell me about hooking up with Ng Records and your producer, GGGarth.**

After playing the two clubs [in London, Ontario], back and forth, we decided to make a demo tape at the end of '97/'98. It had four songs and was called *Sex is Hell*. We sold some copies at shows, and we sent them out to labels. A lot of them got returned, a lot got thrown out...

Did you have any label in mind that you wanted to be on?

No, it didn't really matter to us. We just wanted to get stuff out there. One of the demos wound up at Ng Records, and they threw it out. But a couple months later, we played CMW, the Canadian equivalent to CMJ, and one of the guys from Ng was there and thought we were really cool. They wanted to strike a deal. And actually, we had most of our songs ready because we were going to record the CD whether we had a record company

or not.

How high quality was the demo you made?

It cost about \$200. It was a good studio — the same one we used for both demos and the album — but we recorded live off the floor, having not been together for very long. You know how musicians kind of feed off each other, they know what the other players are going to do? Well, we had none of that. It was chaos.

Then you recorded a second demo there?

Yeah, just before CMW. It had six songs and we spent a little more time and money on it. This time, um, we

We played a high school battle of the hands once, and we got booted off the stage. Playing too loud was the official reason, but I think it was more for, well, not really vulgarity, but the principal didn't think women should be doing such things.

spent two days, as opposed to one hour. We needed something we could sell at shows, because we were doing a lot more shows at that time. After CMW, we were going to record another CD with Garth Richardson. We got hooked up with him because he went to school with the guy who runs the studio in London. Garth liked our demo, and he decided to do us a favor. We actually recorded *Spit* before we were officially signed. We did it in May, and we inked the deal in June or July. Then we did the Skinlab mini-tour, and then the 104 Festival in Connecticut in front of 5,000 people. Dee Snider is the morning man on the station, and he invited us on the show. I ate Spam. It was gross. It tasted like cat food.

What do Dee Snider and Twisted Sister mean to you, seeing as you'd

barely been born when they hit it big?

I remember seeing their videos when I was young. That was early '80s, right? I watched TV when I was young! I saw his movie, *Strangeland*, before I met him, and I was *so scared* to meet him. I didn't know if he was actually like that or not. But he was really nice, very down-to-earth. When we played that festival, we were on the second stage, but we drew a *lot* of people. We were overwhelmed. It was like Woodstock to us. We were nervous, but it was awesome.

It seems a lot of high-powered people have supported you and nudged you in the right direction.

You know, we've been the luckiest people in the world. I mean, we came from *nowhere*; we didn't know *anyone*. Things have just worked out for us, and we've been very fortunate. For once in our lives, people have actually *listened* to us. They actually took an interest in us, and that's been one of the most amazing things in my life.

And then...

Then our bass player quit. She just wasn't committed. She didn't want this to be her life. She wanted to do her thing, stay at home, be normal. She left two weeks before the shoot for our video, "Brackish." But then we got Talena, and she learned the entire album in a week. We played one little show, just to warm her up, and then we shot the video in front of 1100 people.

How'd you meet Talena?

She's been friends with Mercedes for a long time. She's been very supportive of the band from the beginning. She's actually a guitarist, and she played drums for another band as well. **Was the change of bass players why the record was delayed?**

Yes, we were originally going to release it in October, but because of the lineup change, we had to redo all the cover art. And there was a song, "Paperdoll," that the other bassist sang, so we re-recorded it with Talena, so she does appear on the album. Actually, I played bass on a few of tracks: "Raven," "Immortal," and something else. And just recently, we recorded a cover of Pink Floyd's "Run Like Hell" for a tribute album. It doesn't sound like Pink Floyd at all until it gets to the vocals. It's very Kittie.

I have to ask, do you have cats?

Well, mostly we wanted something that sounded very cute and docile, unlike the music... But yeah, I'm an



animal lover. I have two cats and I love them dearly. One is Filly and the other is Thunder. Don't put that in. I don't want to be a nerd.

What's wrong with liking cats? I have a cat, Ugh, and I like him more than I like most people.

I also like horses, too. I went to riding camp when I was young. But Kittie made a better band name.

*Interview with Fallon Bowman
(guitar/vocals):*

Seeing as you're a founding member, tell me about the initial impulse to start a band.

Well, I'm glad to say I had a very happy upbringing. I've been surrounded by music my whole life, both listening to it and having relatives who are musicians. My grandfather was a violinist.

Were you encouraged to take up an instrument as a child?

No, but I sang a lot as a kid. I always liked the spotlight, I'd sing at family reunions and stuff.

You were a ham, huh? Morgan said she was shy; is that true or is she being modest?

She's pretty shy, but she has her moments. I have times when I'm shy, but usually I'm like, "Ahhh, I don't care."

When did you start playing guitar?

When I was 12 or so.

Was it of your own free will? It wasn't that your parents gave you the choice of playing an instrument, a sport, or cheerleading as some kind of extra curricular activity?

Actually, I *wanted* to be a cheerleader, but my parents were against it.

Your rebellion was to be a cheerleader, huh?

They said they'd disown me if I became a cheerleader. So I played the guitar instead. I was really influenced by Nirvana at the time.

What were the first few songs you learned how to play?

"No Rain" by Blind Melon. And the first song I could play from beginning to end perfectly was "Aneurysm" by Nirvana.

When you're warming up, what's the first riff you play?

Anything off the new Hatebreed album. **Hatebreed the band or Hatebreeder the Children of Bodom album?**

The band; I'm not *that* good yet. I've never taken a lesson, but I used to buy *Guitar World* all the time and stuff the tablature. I have no idea how to read music, but I can read tablature and I know what sounds good.

Perhaps I'm dating myself here, but Deep

Purple's "Smoke on the Water" was the first riff I learned how to play, and I always thought that was kinda universal.

"No Rain" was the first song because that's what my friend showed me. I really wanted to know how to play... And then I stole his guitar for eight months or so. It was an acoustic with nylon strings...

Plastic strings are actually easier to learn on. I learned on my mom's steel-stringed acoustic, and it felt like the strings were an inch off the fretboard.

This guitar was so beaten up... Actually, I used to make a little chart of how long I practiced. I used to practice three hours a day. I was very determined, I wanted to show all the boys at school that I really *could* play guitar.

Another dating thing here: ask any metal band who their biggest influence was and they'll say Black Sabbath. But Black Sabbath sucked by the time you were old enough to play guitar. They're not an influence for you at all, are they?

(Laughing) No. I have a friend who's really into them and Led Zeppelin and he's always playing them for me, trying to get me into them, but they just don't *do* anything for me.

I've resisted asking this question until now: how old are you?

I'm 16.

How about everyone else? Or don't you want to answer...

I'm OK with it, but we don't like it when people stress our age.

I ask strictly for music reference points, I assure you. I find it interesting that you're not at all influenced by Sabbath when the majority of the genre is. So c'mon, how old is everyone?

We're all in our late teens.

That'll do. What bands did influence you?

Personally, I'm very influenced by The Deftones. I love the vocals, and the way the guitars go with the vocals. They go so hand-in-hand, I think it's beautiful.

How about Pantera?

Pantera, yeah! I also like Soulfly and Sepultura's *Roots*. Anything before that I call "old metal."

I find that curious. I know grunge grew out of an understandable loathing of glam rock, and I've wondered if nü metal or whatever they call it stemmed from actually hating "old metal": thrash, speed metal, and, ya know, riffs.

I'm really into *groove*. I also really like Incubus because they're a very groovy band.

Do you like the Chemical Brothers and Prodigy?

I love all that stuff. Metal and electronica mixed together is the coolest. Stuff like Rammstein.

But what about leads and fills -- riffs, basically? The kind of stuff that makes other guitarists wet themselves and young guitarists want to throw their cheap guitars out the window because you rock their lame-ass worlds?

I'm not a lead girl. I *cannot* play solos. I've tried... But it's all about the riffs. We like to stay smack-dab in the middle between technical riffs and simple riffs.

I think Meshuggah is the natural progression from Pantera -- simple, binary riffs interspersed with mind-boggling solos.

Oh my God, they are so cool! They're completely out there. And they groove...

Interview with Talena (bass)

You followed the band long before you were a member, but did you know Mercedes before she was in the band?

No, I met her and she said she was in a band, so I went to see them. I dove off the stage at one of their shows. That was my first and only stagedive. I went to almost all of their shows. I really liked that they had the guts to go up on stage and play this kind of music.

You were originally a guitarist?

Yeah, but I wasn't very good at it. The band I played in never actually practiced, so I don't know if you could call that a band. Every time we were going to practice, someone always wanted to go shopping instead.

Was it a girl band?

Yeah, it was a chick band. When we *did* all get to practice, they'd invite guys over and they'd take the instruments and play, so we never actually got anything done. And in the other band -- the Nirvana cover band -- I was the only girl. I love Nirvana, but playing someone else's music all the time wasn't what I wanted to do. It got boring and it ruined the songs for me. When Mercedes asked me if I wanted to play bass, I'd never touched a bass in my life.

Were you in a band at the time they called?

The band I was in had given me the boot, as they like to put it. That's OK because all they ever played was Nirvana and they sucked. I was looking for a real band -- guitar, drums, whatever...

What did you do? Work?

I had a job, but I quit because the place was raunchy. It was called Hook's, and it was a Chinese restaurant that looked like a truck stop. It was really nasty.

We're you a cook, a waitress?

I was a bus girl.

From bus girl to bassist in a signed and touring metal band, that's quite a career advancement...

Yeah, I think I've finally found my calling. **J**

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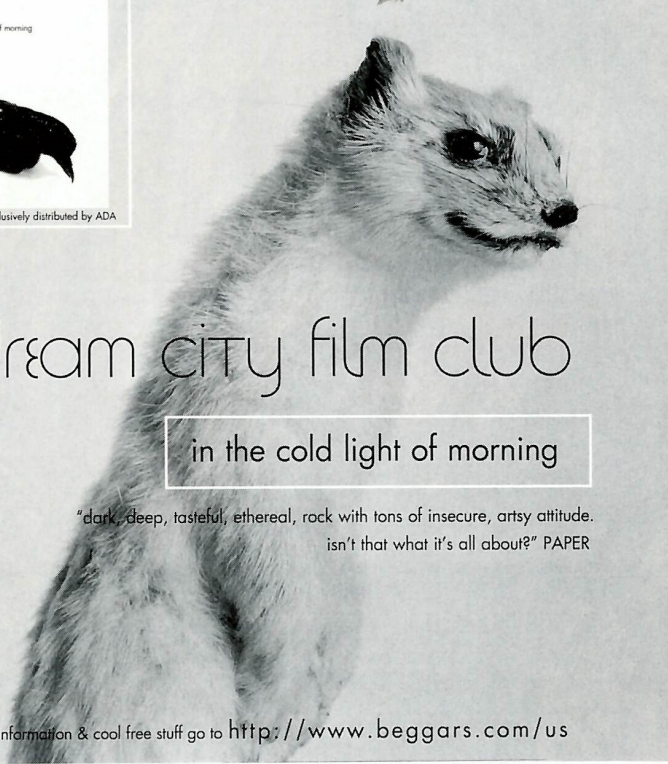
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David S. Ware's

SOUL-SONIC FORCE



By Phil Freeman

Spirituality and 20th century music have been linked since the roots of rock and jazz began to push through the soil of popular culture. Hard-living blues legend Robert Johnson described a hellhound on his trail, Hank Williams saw the light, Eric Clapton found a way to live in the presence of the Lord, and, most recently, Madonna claims to have been graced by a somewhat ambiguous (and marketable) ray of light. But spirituality also permeates the slightly lesser known arenas of jazz and

improvised music. Since it first erupted in the mid-'60s, spirituality has dominated the best jazz, be it the gospel-tinged, bottom-heavy "soul jazz" of Jimmy Smith and Cannonball Adderly or, more startlingly, the ecstatic, improvised free jazz of Albert Ayler, Pharaoh Sanders, Archie Shepp, Marion Brown, and, of course, John Coltrane.

Free jazz initially allied itself with the burgeoning black consciousness movements of the '60s. But as those movements burned out, free jazz began to take a more introspective turn. The musicians began to use their determinedly underground status as a framework for serious sonic introspection, and every performance and recording became the document of an increasingly inward spiral of discovery. The movement had abandoned its original rebellions against traditional jazz (and society in general), and by the mid-'70s had become an aesthetic unto itself.

As the groundwork for the new direction was laid out by artists such as Cecil Taylor, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, and Ronald Shannon Jackson, a new school of musicians began to emerge who were seemingly *born* to play free jazz and sought nothing else. A new school arose out of this aesthetic, and the star pupils of that new direction are the four members of the David S. Ware quartet.

Ware's quartet may well be the best and most active jazz unit in the country – or the world for that matter. Their music is four-part but of a whole nature, introspective yet explosive, careening and near-sacred in its beauty. Ware's saxophone alternately weeps and explodes, bringing every aspect of jazz from blues howls to inchoate roars into his ferocious, boiling cascades of sound. Pianist Matthew Shipp hurls fist-sized chunks of transcendent beauty in every direction. Rock-solid bassist William Parker alternately plucks, bows, and thumps below, around, and above Ware's saxophone. And drummer Susie

Ibarra is simply fascinating to watch. The dynamics of her stroke and her insistence on percussive variety (she brings such a variety of gongs, maracas, and tiny bells to performances that sometimes it seems her drum kit is a last resort) bring a unique melodicism to her rhythmic role.

Their improvised journey included *Third Ear Recitation* (from 1993 and Ware's favorite of the bunch), *Dao* ('95) and *Wisdom of Uncertainty* ('97). Following this period Ware ventured into a remarkable exploration of the true power of music; his 1998 release, *Go See the World*, is probably the most sonically forceful piece of music to emerge on Columbia Records since Miles Davis' work from the '70s.

Ware himself is an intimidating presence. He's tall, powerfully built, and he looks you in the eye from a head-tucked posture, like a boxer would. He walks with a limp from a knee injury dating back to his days as a New York City cab driver. Sitting down with me, he pauses before answering my questions, wary of letting false impressions slip forth. In a New York free jazz scene built on rampant one-off sessions and performances, Ware often stays to the side, only appearing in the context of quartet performances. "I've always wanted to do it like that – just to have a steady band and develop my own music," he says. "I've never been interested in sitting in, checking this one out, playing someone else's music; that fulfilled itself for me with Cecil Taylor."

In the early '70s, Ware was Taylor's saxophonist, appearing with bassist William Parker, who would later join Ware in his own quartet. "I think jazz – the music – *especially* the avant-garde end of it, suffers from us not keeping together steady bands," he continues. "I'm interested in the *evolution* of a music, being *thorough* about what it is you're doing. You stay in one situation and you work out all the fine points, all the details of that music. I think that we [in the

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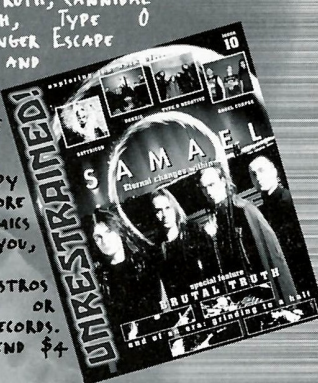
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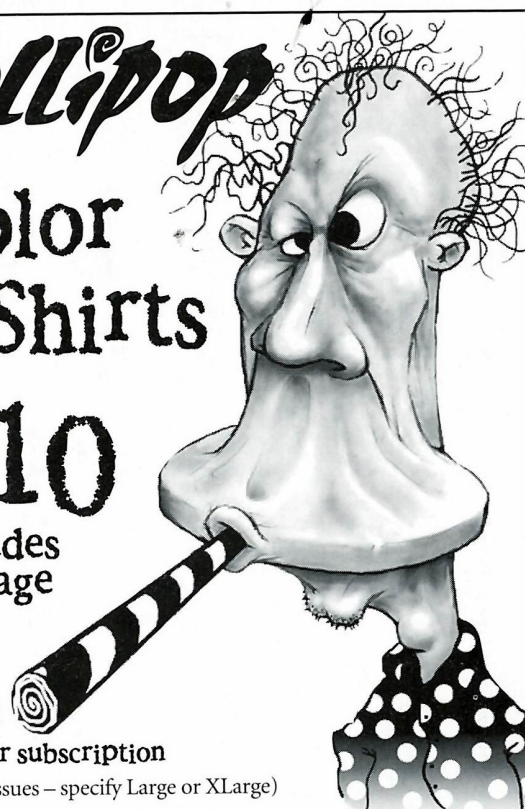
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SUCK ON THIS!



NYC scene] are skipping over that. There's a lot of musicians who are working here, working there – and there and there and there – and there's a lot of fine points they're not catching." It's this sense of artistic discipline that has enabled Ware and his band to persevere through years of financial adversity.

Free jazz has not been, in the past, a music likely to make its players rich. Nevertheless, Ware has kept the quartet together for 10 years, save for the replacement of drummer Whit Dickey by Ibarra in 1995. Ware's primary concern is the band's future, particularly now with Columbia behind them. He dismisses those who might wonder what such a volcanic band offers the staid Columbia Jazz roster.

"There are a lot of people who respect what we do and recognize the connection we have to the tradition," he says. "For us to be on Columbia with Billie Holiday and Miles – it makes perfect sense. That's where we're supposed to be. If what they're saying about

us is true, then that's where we're supposed to be."

One of the most fascinating aspects of Ware's work has indeed been its rootedness in tradition, but not the calcified "jazz tradition" exemplified by the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra or \$35-a-head jazz clubs where corporate execs politely golf-clap between songs. Ware and his band belong, instead, to the tradition of Albert Ayler, Archie Shepp, Pharoah Sanders, and a thousand others – free jazz, as this music has come to be known. And Ware is very conscious of the lineage of his art. "It has its own line," he says. "It has its own tradition; it is its own school. The problem is... it's not an 'anything goes' type of tradition, and that's the way it's been construed."

Ware says that many jazz critics miss the point of improv music, alternately dismissing it as mere undisciplined noise or damning it with

unequivocal praise, as though the music were a Special Olympics race where everybody gets a ribbon just for trying. "I don't think that people – writers – exactly understand what improvisation is," he says. "See, when you go to music school... it's not taught; it's nonexistent. The creative spirit, what improvisation is, is lost. It's been lost – it's a lost art. And when I say that, it doesn't mean people are not improvising. It means that the meaning behind it is lost. Because what it really is, it's something connected with our existence. The force that has us here is an improvising power. Life itself is improvisation. All this variety you see..." he pauses to gesture around the screened porch in which we sit and the plants that surround, "...is improvisation. But that's been lost, that understanding. So that's why you get everything sounding the same in music, because of the way it's taught."

Ware says he's determined to bring his group's music to as many people as possible, touring whenever and wherever someone will have them. Indeed, he is intrigued by the possibilities of the long-rumored convergence of free jazz, extreme hardcore, and death metal. The idea of playing with bands such as [now-defunct] Brutal Truth, who covered Sun Ra on their last CD, fits into Ware's musical universe very neatly. "It's [the free-jazz/death-metal/punk crossover] been in embryonic form for the past several years, and I'd like to see it taken to another stage of development so we can start playing the punk-rock circuit, play some small auditoriums, make it real."

Go See the World is an apt description of his mindset and his intentions. "Being on Columbia is part of my dream," he tells me. "I think it's an accomplishment in itself, just to be there. It's rising to the top, to where the attention can be more focused on you, and that's what we want. I feel like this band represents a whole lot of music, and it's a lot of responsibility, in a sense. The success of this project will either take this music a long way or it will keep it where it is... If this thing is successful, it's going to make people in the music industry and audiences around the world pay closer attention to this particular tradition."

An artistic tradition, a musical school, resting on the shoulders of one man – David S. Ware is up to the challenge. **J**



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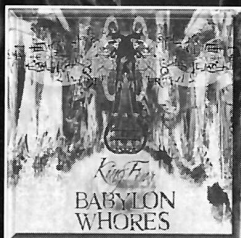
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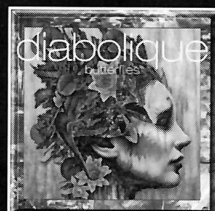


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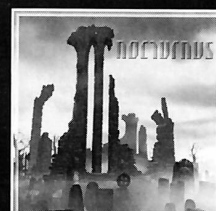
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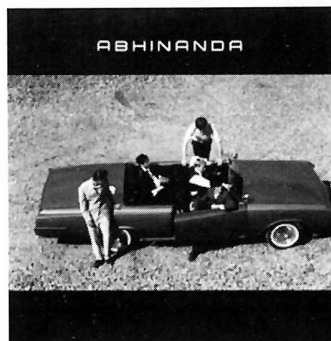
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TEST DRIVES

Extreme Sounds



Abhinanda

Rumble (Vique Simba)

Ex-guitarist of Refused, drummer of Komeda (incredibly rhythmic Swedish pop band): they rock, need I say more? **Abhinanda's** third full-length is one that'll make you sweat, roar happily at its might, and wow at its daring moments. This is a rock-'n'-roll record of strange hybrids, but one that produces nothing but smiles in the end. Once in a while, you spot the Hellacopter-isms and the remnants of Shape of Punk to Come-era Refused, but then moments like the middle of "The Rumble" arrive and defy categorization. Mumbling cellos, guitar pickings that sound like electronic keyboards... then bam!, back to rock. The band pulls this tasteful turn again in the next track, "Easy Digestion," and it's just as smooth and innovative-sounding as the first tune. On the rest of the tracks, Abhinanda lowers the unpredictable factor and lets loose a bit more, but never without elements

of intrigue in either the time signatures or the guitar work. So as I stand in my living room doing the Guy-from-Fugazi dance (resembling a rag doll being thrown side to side, caught in the middle of a Southern gospel sermon) with a big fucking grin on my face, I stop from time to time to say "god-damn!" at the tricks these boys pull with their instruments. A superb combination of raw heaviness and challenging pit-inducers, *Rumble* is some rockin' shit.

—Tim Den



Agalloch

Pale Folklore (The End)

Once again, California-based The End Records have released another winner. This is the debut of Oregon's **Agalloch**, but from the expertly crafted songs and poetic lyrics one would never guess at the youth of the group. The music can best be described as atmospheric dark metal, mixing symphonic elements with doom, folk, and a hint of black

metal, creating an overall mood of tragedy and epic sadness.

Agalloch are not in a hurry to get to their destination; melodies are slowly woven and given a chance to develop, finally building into the perfect crescendo. Both acoustic and clean guitars are used extensively. Other sounds, like piano, harp, and an orchestra, all add to the elegant sound. The vocals are diverse, using a black metal whisper, clean, and female vocals in various appropriate spots.

It's obvious that a lot of thought went into the album packaging as well. The front and back covers look like the wood from an old door, the back of the booklet shows the door, and inside are various nature photos of snow-covered landscapes. The symbolic act of opening the door and passing through into winter goes perfectly with the music, contrasting the warmth of the inside with the chill of the elements and the feelings of depression that anyone who lives in that climate are very familiar with. The whole album is a work of genius.

Containing six songs and running just over 60 minutes, *Pale Folklore* is not for the music fan who lacks patience. This is music to savor and play again and again, reveling in the little nuances that are discovered each time. Agalloch should appeal to fans of Amorphis, Katatonia, and Paradise Lost. The term "instant

classic" is thrown around a lot, but in this case it applies.

—Scott Wilcox

Amon Amarth



The Avenger (Metal Blade)

Once more recording with Peter Tagtgren at The Abyss Studios, **Amon Amarth** have made an album very similar to their last, while reducing the death elements and tightening away from thrash. It's still melodic, somewhat like In Flames, while rocking down a black pathway closer to, say, God Dethroned. Throughout the seven songs (36 minutes) there's a sustained intensity driven by a torrent of drums, while the band death-growl through straight Viking tales, resulting in what is basically accessible Gothic black metal wholly without black metal themes. The lyrics, reminiscent of Manowar, are countered by relentless double-bass speed supporting a wall of guitars. A meeting of three disciplines that works to a point: low on originality, but operating skillfully in a realm, where for now, we could use a few more bands.

—Martin Popoff

Angel Dust

Bleed (Century Media)

That creepy mascot is back for **Angel Dust's** second record in the '90s (the band also had two in the '80s!), and their sound continues to be a power metal that is off the beaten path; rougher, gruffer, and simply ballsier than the pussy power of the Tolkien, chalice, and leprechaun bunch. Angel Dust zig when others zag, going with the odd prominent synth, a bit o



Jon Lord, a bit of bald electric piano, none of it used the way other power metallers use it. But the big story is the mountainous guitar terrain, further lumber-jacked by the authoritative vocals of Dirk Thurisch. Well-known metal god Siggie Bemm produces the thing (he engineered *Borders Of Reality*), and does a fat, stadium rock job of it, with just enough grit to keep it metal. He's the perfect man for the band's thick but oddly graceful songs. A bit of tourmates Nevermore may have rubbed off on these guys, for Angel Dust now convince the listener of the dramatic sweep found within their tales, writing songs that are epic in emotion but also pretty damned immediate.

—Martin Popoff

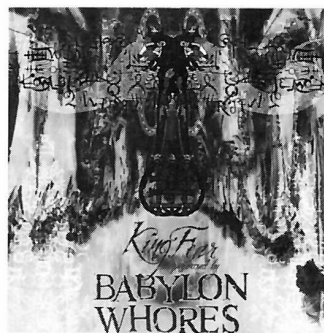
Albert Ayler

Live in Greenwich Village
(Impulse)

Albert Ayler's body was found in New York's East River on Nov. 25, 1970, drowned under circumstances that to this day are a mystery. A tenor saxophonist, Ayler had returned from a military stint in 1963 to start what was one of the most misunderstood, innovative careers in jazz history. With the use of screeches, split-tones, and heavy vibrato — like Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane before him — Ayler helped define free jazz. With trumpeter Don Cherry, Ayler released albums that would serve as landmarks for jazz history. Once, when asked if he had any advice on how to listen to his music, Ayler said, "One way *not* to is to focus on the notes and stuff like that... You have to try and listen to everything together; follow the sound."

The great thing about this double CD is that you can hear many different styles and tempos being used that, separated, would never seem to fit together, but Ayler turns them all into complex, yet seamless, pieces of music. These recordings were compiled from a series of various concert dates and venues in the East Village from the summer of 1967 and prove to be a great collection of recorded live jazz. *Live in Greenwich Village* is highly recommended for any fan of free jazz or anyone wanting to hear what it's all about.

— Tom Minarchick



Babylon Whores

King Fear (Necropolis)

Finland's **Babylon Whores** have built on the buzz begun by their Cold Heaven debut, going louder, more rockish and loutish, tapping into that Americanized version of "death rock" that has pushed Entombed to become Hellacopters. Lyrically, the band stays with the darkness, wrapping this one in a particularly death-obsessed definition of alchemy. Comparisons are many — Lords Of The New Church, Cramps, The Cult, Type O, Christian Death, Electric Hellfire Club, Metallica, Sentenced, Monster Magnet, Entombed, English stoner rock, Danzig, heck, even Killing Joke all come to mind; even if qualitatively it's just a fiery, "get-loaded at the show and bang thy head" sort of experience. Adding to the presentation are the sonorous, ironic, sarcastic, tongue-in-cheek vocals of Ike Vil, who manages to wink an eye indicating that the band's big stadium rock riffs are

more vital to the meaning of life than the claptrap he's babbling about. The last track, "King Fear: Song For The Damned" cranked me up: spacey, atmospheric, acid-winged like Wyndorf — and it even has flutes! —Martin Popoff



Candiria

Process of Self-Development
(MIA)

Candiria was among the "Top 10" metal bands mentioned in Rolling Stone and, indeed, they'll be one of the most important bands in the coming years. But not only in the genre of metal: Candiria's hybrid of jazz, hip-hop (true hip-hop, none of that rapcore bullshit), futuristic hardcore, and apocalyptic presentation (gorgeous layout, lyric theory, and overall flowing imagery) is not only the freshest sound to emerge out of the avant-garde heavy scene in ages, it's getting audiences everywhere to reevaluate experimental music, aggro-core, crossover trends, and record design. Candiria's done this not just by switching from one mood to another, but by never losing their listeners to overly-artsy/self-indulgent gibberish. For that alone, Candiria has solidified their position as a top contender. They want you to fuck shit up and contemplate philosophy hand-in-hand. Balance is the key for this band, and it shows in the way they maintain a core vibe (and identity) despite the million directions they explore.

Drawing on everything from Thelonius Monk, Meshuggah, The Roots, and early '90s fusion-prog-jazz-metal à la Cynic and Believer, Candiria's multi-faceted identity also

embodies something none of the above had: urban discipline. A feel of street-smarts and intellectual advancement permeates the songs. They make tough music sound intelligent, and intelligent music sound tough.

—Tim Den

Cannibal Corpse

Bloodthirsty (Metal Blade)

To say **Cannibal Corpse** is one of the premiere death-metal bands would be redundant. After all, this is the band that won "honorable mention" from the likes of Bob Dole and had the privilege of becoming the first death-metal band to crack the Billboard top 200 ('96's *Vile*). Since they first formed in the late '80s, the power quartet has released nothing but the finest of gory brutality. To anyone who has yet to experience their glorious peak ('94's *The Bleeding*, '93's *Tombs of the Mutilated*, and the '89 debut, *Eaten Back to Life*), you have no idea what messy fun you're missing.

By default, the seventh record from the Florida-by-way-of-Buffalo masters already rules. The third record to feature vocalist George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher, the band now sounds more comfortable and willing to push the limits of technicality. Fisher's vocals have finally been given the full exercise they've been lacking since original vocalist Chris Barnes' dismissal in '95. It's obvious Fisher (and the band's other lyricists) took more time this time around to come up with playful vocal patterns, beefing up not only the heaviness but the unpredictable in a form of music that's "been there, done that" with every trick in the book.





Cannibal Corpse

Fisher's punctuating vocals seem to be the only thing keeping time in the band. The drumming on this complex, multi-riffage-filled record barely makes any attempt to distinguish one measure from another, much less one time signature from another. There are no "signaling" cymbal hits, no fills at the end of a measure to give listeners a "heads up" to the next section. And if you aren't reading along with the lyric sheet, you'll never find your way out of the often too-complicated riffing. While the band got away with this in the past, *Bloodthirsty* just isn't as catchy as the older material

Aside from that, *Bloodthirsty* is still Cannibal Corpse running on full power: flesh-ripping guitars, blast beats, and always-reliable stomach-turning lyrics. It's definitely a pit-inducer, and very likely to cause whiplash among Hessians. Though it's not the most ground-breaking record, it doesn't have to be. Cannibal Corpse stands as one of the first to play death metal, and one of the genre's most essential assets.
—Tim Den

Coal Chamber

Chamber Music (Roadrunner)

This highly anticipated follow-up from **Coal Chamber** is more than a little disappointing, with motormouth Dez and crew making a repetitious, sleepy, confused, weakly-produced record that's just a little too electronica and hip-hop

for my liking. The grooves are gone, and there are actually fewer hooks, something the debut's barks and power chords made up for. Multiple vocal approaches also add to the confusion — Dez seems to have tried to craft a record for everyone, just channel-surfing into this, into that, all



Coal Chamber

of it trendy, all of it badly-written. Everybody talks about the cover of "Shock The Monkey," and well they should, because it's awful, Ozzy



turning in a dishrag of a performance, the band coming up with multiple limp ideas to accompany the disaster, ultimately creating a microcosm of the record's watery, meandering faults. Pretty damn good live, this tireless tour machine will sell boatloads, given equally tireless promotion by tenacious manager Sharon Osbourne. But you can't help thinking that the recorded product, at least this time out, is akin to getting a tour program.

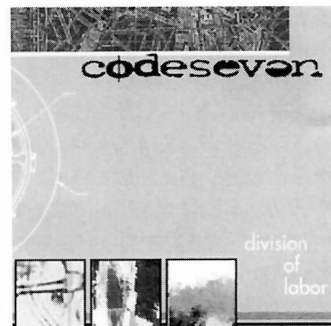
—Martin Popoff

Codeseven

Division of Labor (TMC)

As the album title suggests, what we have here is a (smart) band that realizes its ambitious songwriting can only be actualized if each member — competent in their individual fields — shares duties equally... even if it means having two vocalists. Unlike other outfits who do the screaming-then-singing routine (I won't name any names because it's at least a respectable effort toward breaking precedents), **Codeseven** realize that in order to pull off the artsy metal-

core/screamo hybrid without sounding awkward, they need equal parts brutality and melody. And unlike other bands who force their ogre singers to croon like a (tone) deaf child, Codeseven know they need two frontmen. In the process, Codeseven break another precedent. Two singers? I hope people pick up



on that detail. Or at least realize, "Shit, my hardcore singer sounds like a punctured trumpet in comparison."

Recorded by Kurt Ballou of Converge, Codeseven draws on everything from Far to Indecision, Sons Of Abraham to Converge (duh). It's hectic and multi-layered, but never leaves out the melodic bridges. Some of the singing is a bit Middle Eastern flavored, which warps the songs even more. Nice. The production is clean, heavy, and very live, a sign screaming, "We're even better on stage!"

—Tim Den

Darkane

Rusted Angel (War/Relapse)

Brand-new, fangs-dripping, heavenly down into artful Swedish death, and ultimately both fast and fun, **Darkane** are the stormchild of a couple ex-Agretator guys, Christofer Malmstrom and Peter Wildoer. Peter has meticulously flare-bombed the skins for Armageddon and, more significantly, Arch Enemy. Wildoer's participation, and the fact that *Rusted Angel* is produced by Daniel Bergstrand (Stuck Mojo, Meshuggah and Strapping Young Lad), has brought into existence an album that strikes at the stake of Witchery, but with a crackly, vibrant drum-propelled sound that's

recorded with trebly, trembling metal heart. Bergstrand's main contribution is the Stuck Mojo-ish drum sound, which pokes like a thousand pin pricks. So there's a certain (cleaner, more deliberately arranged) Witchery vibe, along with shards'n'shafts of God Dethroned, Arch Enemy, Death and In Flames, catapulted into worthy, non-derivative status (just barely) by the interest-holding vocals of Bjorn Strid. Strid does Witchery-style Euro death, US death, melodic, old school German thrash, Bay Area, and scrap-faced NWOBHM at various points on this relentless millennial speedster. Highly in vogue, or at least in my vogue, Darkane's sound is one that speaks to the few true velocities of the headbang, while throwing in five buckets of complication, just in case you want to get all academic. —Martin Popoff

Miles Davis

The Complete Bitches Brew
(Columbia/Legacy)

When *Bitches Brew* was first released in 1970, jazz purists believed Miles Davis was turning his back on traditional jazz and, in effect, his early work. In retrospect, this statement has no validity, but at the time of its release, fans, critics, and even fellow musicians felt this way. Looking back, though, you can see the beginning of this transition starting with his '65 to '68 quintet, of which Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock were part, continuing with Davis into the *Bitches Brew* sessions. Where he once dabbled with the quintet, he now immersed himself with *Bitches Brew*. Very interested in what Jimi Hendrix, Sly Stone, and James Brown were doing at the time, Davis even had Mitch Mitchell of the Jimi Hendrix Experience play on some early demos for the album. The most direct influences of jazz/rock were from Cannonball Adderly and the Tony Williams Experience (Williams was formerly the drummer of the Miles Quintet).

At the time, jazz had lost a major portion of its audience, especially

the younger crowd. Davis wanted to breathe new life into jazz, instead of letting it stagnate as it had begun to, by turning more people, young and old, on to jazz by showing that jazz was much more than just their parents' old Louis Armstrong records. Davis started incorporating electric piano and guitar into his music, and many regard this as the beginning of "fusion." Others had mixed rock and jazz before, but none had made it so interwoven and indistinguishable before this.

The Complete Bitches Brew features more than a third unreleased material and includes every inch of recorded tape. You don't have to worry about the unreleased stuff being alternates or outtakes that Davis wouldn't have wanted released; he erased everything he didn't want to keep. The first two CDs cover the majority of the original release, while the third and fourth are composed of mostly unreleased tracks that are much more laid back and groove oriented. This gives the set a more well-rounded sound than the original version. The night I bought this I played all four CDs in a row — not because I'm some hard-core jazz fan; it's just that good. —Tom Minarchick



Defender

They Came Over The High Pass
(Necropolis)

Ex-Afflicted and present Cranium bassist Philip Von Segebaden has cooked up an interesting idea here: mixing prog metal, Manowar, Angel Dust, and classic

Maiden with a curiously large dose of what can only be described as Blaze-era Maiden. What drags it in that direction is the rough'n'tumble vocal work of Michael van de Graaf (also ex-Afflicted) and the bombastic, dark, and involved nature of the songs. Eminently more flavorful than power metal, the sum total of this trip is like a long lost 1979 album from Bathory or something — totally fanciful, but passionately built in a vacuum. Normally, you would call this sort of production perfectly average — nothing wrong with it, nothing weird about it — but Von Segebaden has purposely left a bit of friction, just to remind us this isn't Primal Fear getting fancy. Hard to pin down what causes my unquestioning respect, but it has something to do with this sounding like a "rarity," like NWOBHM wingnuts Sledgehammer crossed with Iced Earth, like eccentric guys with long beards totally trapped within their obsessive metalness, puttering around in some shack in the hills.

—Martin Popoff

Dismember

Hate Campaign (Nuclear Blast)



Culling the band's best attributes, *Hate Campaign* is quintessential Dismember, cranked up to At The Gates-like tempos much of the time, bog-blasted with the band's tumbled and rumbled guitar sound, and finally, rife with both riffs and solos which clutch at the heartstrings of arcane Maiden through the latter '80s and early '90s. Production values are curious and eccentric, as usual, but this time, with no major error-like distractions. Accessible with respect to the bass, drums and vocals, but clawed and

bloody when it comes to those awful and awe-inspiring guitars (sorta reminds me of someone smoking through one of those holes in the throat). Compositionally, it's a well-mapped presentation, a little more complicated than usual but still stuffed with good "death rock" melodies. It's perhaps all 'round, the most useful Dismember album, and this from a catalogue which is generally pretty well-hung, despite metal purists' catcalls about the band being a mere alternative to Entombed (something quite desirable at this point).

—Martin Popoff

Drunk Horse

Drunk Horse (Man's Ruin)

Sure am glad folks somehow keep finding interesting ways to make stoner rock. Glad, but incredulous. Anyway, *Drunk Horse* remind me of the real thing, not the Sabbath stuff, but all the fringe bands from '70 – '72, only these guys make you imagine you've found the one rarity that's actually heavier than Deep Purple, but not as deliberate as the Sabs. It's almost a metal version of Alice Cooper's Love It To Death, or a really metal version of Easy Action or Pretties For You, somewhat disassembled like '60s psyche but smothered in oven-mitted Kiss-like power chords, mebbe closer to the final two Amboy Dukes hamhockers. File with Leadfoot, Terra Firma, and Clutch, all being time-travellers into an era where much metal was purely accidental, mental, and occidental. —Martin Popoff

Entombed

Black Juju (Man's Ruin)

Quite the coup: Man's Ruin snags snaggletooths Entombed and then gets a heavier, more spirited performance out of them as compared to "cleverness" of Same Difference. The CD version of *Black Juju* is an expanded, eight-track, 26-minute item that builds on the four-track 10" smokey-vinyl artifact of the same name released

October-ish '99, with four covers (Twisted Sister, Jerry's Kids, Bob Dylan, Dwarves) from '97s The Wreckage EP. Suitable to the Man's Ruin mandate, this EP combines the three or four characteristics of the Entombed sound with violent stoner rock in the fine tradition of MC5. The highlights are the title track (an obscure Alice Cooper cover) and the punk-fired version of "Ballad Of Hollis Brown," while most of the thing achieves a death rock viscosity far and above the alternative experimentation of Same Difference. Half-properly recorded, with the four Wreckage tracks being of minimal demo quality.

—Martin Popoff

Eyehategod

Southern Discomfort (Century Media)

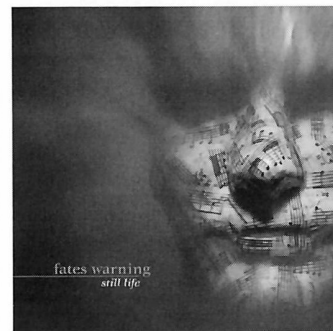


As **Eyehategod** contemplated break-up, aborted releases, and success at side-projects, a scattering of 7" releases made the rounds to other labels. Here they are gathered, along with a few alternate versions of LP tracks, just so you wouldn't forget who defined the left-hand path in New Orleans, just so you'd understand what muck lies beneath the more accessible sounds of Down, COC, Acid Bath, Soilent Green, and Crowbar. Indeed, Eyehategod are the sludge metal glue that holds the scene together in it's slow, sluggish, and avant garde state, never to rise above Relapse band status due to the vomitory blech! of vocalist Michael D. Williams. Anyway, this gives you a proper, stuporous, phosphorous glimpse into what makes labels like Man's Ruin, MIA, The Music Cartel, and Rise Above

exist and click, and for a lot less money than it would take you to collect the singles. Plus, oddly, the sum total is a dog's hair more accessible than the sum of Dopesick. Hail the nervy noiseniks! —Martin Popoff

Fates Warning

Still Life (Metal Blade)



As is the case with most live albums, **Fates Warning's** double live disc is essential only to completists and diehard fans. Disc One contains the entire "A Pleasant Shade of Gray," the 50-minute song that was the entirety of the last Fates Warning studio album. While the band plays this huge, complex piece flawlessly, I'm just not a big fan of it, and having it on two consecutive releases is overkill. Disc Two has seven songs, including the epic "Ivory Gate of Dreams," "The Eleventh Hour," and "We Only Say Goodbye." I was hoping for some John Arch-era material, until I heard "Prelude to Ruin," the one song from this time period. Ray, I love your vocals, but you just can't do John Arch.

The production is slick and the musicianship impeccable, as one would expect from such a technical band. Missing are the things that make live albums special for fans: extended solos, banter with the crowd, or cover songs that haven't been recorded in the studio. Sometimes live albums are surrogate "greatest hits" collections, but, in Fates Warning's case, the excellent *Chasing Time* already fills that role.

I enjoyed the album, and, being a completist, I'm glad to have it. However, it isn't something I'm

going to come back to often; probably only if I'm listening to the entire catalogue. Next time, guys, how about a double album of *new* material? That would be something to get excited about; double live albums are a dime a dozen these days.

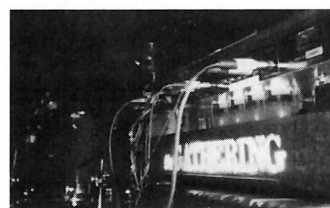
— Scott Wilcox

The Gathering

Superheat (Century Media)

For those who thought the band's previous double CD was one disc too long, **The Gathering** offer this first live album, recorded over two dates in their Holland homeland. Anneke and crew fill over half of this esoteric love-in with the most realized tracks from *How To Measure A Planet?* No band is more of an intimate, individual, yoga-like experience than the new trip-hopped Gathering, yet there's a certain magic found in experiencing these tracks with a crowd. Everything's much more organic, electro-tricks are kept to a minimum and, ultimately, you can get all warm and communal with the wise, almost smug, vocals. The highlight is undeniably "On Most Surfaces," the band's best song, hailing from '97's *Nighttime Birds*, one of only four tracks not from the latest album. It's a gallant attempt, but it can't match the studio version. Elsewhere, the band smartly weave complementary tracks (one weirdo exception being Hawkwind's "Liberty Bell"). This is a good move, The Gathering being roughly three different bands through their five albums. For *Superheat*, the psychedelic is king, er, queen, and the band picks the hookiest, most emotion-packed titles from their latest incarnation, an incarnation that is infuriating to some, but one that is unarguably at the forefront of this strange offshoot of a genre.

—Martin Popoff



Immolation

Failures For Gods (Metal Blade)



The New York band **Immolation** have attained a cult status in the death-metal underworld. The band have been around since '86 (previously under the name Rigor Mortis). In addition to touring constantly, Immolation take their time with each release, making sure it comes out to the specifications of their vision.

Their third album, *Failure For Gods*, ignores the trends of keyboards and melodic lead guitars, rather delivering punishing pure death metal. While the music is heavy and blazingly fast, there is an edge of technicality that adds another dimension. The band are tight, led by the excellent double-bass techniques of drummer Alex Hernandez, and use a lot of time changes to mix things up and keep the listener engaged. However, they don't go too far and confuse the audience just to show everyone how talented they are. Like the conquering Huns, there is a certain strategy to their attack, but that doesn't mean they won't bash your skull in when the time comes.

This technical barbarism is perfect for the evil sound and messages that Immolation disseminate. Accompanying the music are lyrics that some black-metal bands would envy, all about the fall of God, dying angels, etc., delivered in a chilling demon growl by bassist/vocalist Ross Dolan. Taken by themselves the lyrics seem a bit tired, but combined with the music and vocal delivery, they're quite effective.

REFUSED

THE SHAPE OF PUNK TO COME

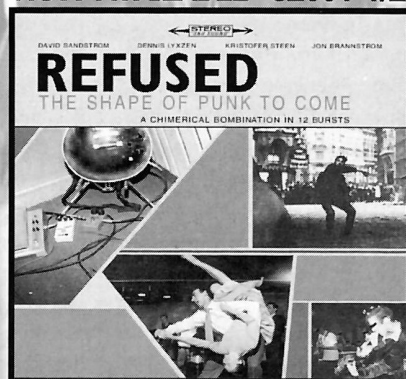
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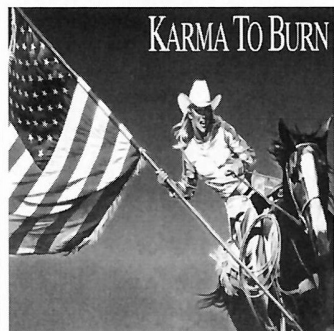
Each of the eight tracks are expertly crafted and performed, but my personal favorites are the title track, which features some excellent bass guitar soloing and "The Stench of High Heaven." The non-stop ferocity of this 40-minute slab of American death metal is exhausting, but you'll still want to hear it again and again. Highly recommended.

— Scott Wilcox

Karma To Burn

Wild Wonderful Purgatory (MIA)

I'm definitely not pleased here; these Clutch homies have stooped their sound into serviceable stoner rock and then loaded the bollocks off the side of the junk heap by making everything an instrumental. This, I gather, is how the band used to do it when they were purists. *Wild*



Wonderful Purgatory (a spoof on the West Virginia license plate) is basically eight of these less-than-utilitarian, carved, uh, things, plus the four tracks from the band's 10" *Wild, Wonderful & Apocalyptic* EP. But like I care, duped guy sitting here listening and then thinking 'hey, wait a darn tootin', I've been shaft-shanked, there's no singing!' Not a good feeling (even if fans of the old days are glad for the return to this questionable practice), these songs are too Man's Ruin/The Music Cartel to support one's attention span without the vocalist, who has simply been deleted from what was once an explosive and creative line-up.

—Martin Popoff

Kreator

Endorama (Pavement)



As much as I use *Kreator* as a reference point, I'm always surprised by how little I like any of their records released in the '90s. While my crusty cronies insist anything after '86's *Pleasure to Kill* is melodic sell-out (I think it's cuz the drummer actually learned how to stay with the rest of the band), I'll easily name *Terrible Certainty* as one of my faves of all time, right up there with *Slayer's Reign in Blood*. Some would include the major label debut, *Extreme Aggression*, but I think that's mostly because Epic sent a bigger boat back to pick up the stragglers. No one in their right mind would consider *Endorama* (which I originally read as *Endure-A-Rama*, which is quite fitting) anything other than a mistake. It's really a shame to hear Kreator trying to write melodic, mid-tempo rock tunes, fail horribly, and continue to draw attention away from the fact that they were THE German thrash pioneers. Hands down, they were the shit. And as much as I dislike telling bands they shouldn't stretch their artistic little wings or whatever, at least they were good at thrash. I can go to any

new band showcase or high school talent show and hear better shit than *Endorama*.

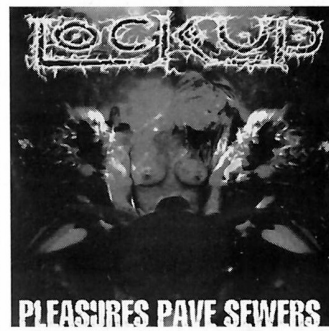
—Scott Hefflon

Lock Up

Pleasures Pave Sewers (Nuclear Blast)

It's side-project time for Napalm Death's Shane Embury and Jesse Pintado, along with Cradle/Dimmu drum tornado Nick Barker and the esteemed Peter Tagtgren, who is curiously on board only as lead vocalist and producer/host-studio-death-maniac. What *Lock Up* achieves is a compact black ball of energy that reflects the range of each of the participants within the tight spectrum of extreme metal. What results is an arresting and invigorating amalgam of old school thrash, death metal, grindcore, and black blastbeats, all captured in stunning hi-fidelity at Peter's Abyss Studios, despite the reportedly small budget thrown at this posse of harsh rock royalty. Actually, it sounds most like breakneck Hypocrisy, with a slash'n'burn slice of Slayer and a dose of Destruction, or conversely, Napalm Death turned Scandinavian ice factory. There's no hardcore, few melodic starbursts, just sawed-off shotgun speed metal down yer gullet, modernized only by advancements within the hard, hard end of metal; no trend-guessing, no window-dressing, not innovative but impressive.

—Martin Popoff



Meshuggah

Chaosphere (Nuclear Blast)

Chaosphere is the perfect



Meshuggah album, for the first time capturing in the studio the intensity and energy that I saw in their live set. While the differences between this and previous releases are small, the end result brings *Chaosphere* very close to perfection.

Truthfully, I have not had time to spin this disc the necessary 500 times to figure out all of the subtle changes, but two obvious ones are apparent. First, the songs are shorter and more compact. Nothing has been sacrificed, it's just more concentrated. Second, there are no comforting, clean passages to break up the assault on the mind of the listener. The result is non-stop, frantic brutality.

Fear not, longtime devotees, Meshuggah's defining aspects still remain. The odd times and complex rhythms are intact, as anyone familiar with the band would expect. A challenging aspect of the music is the seemingly different rhythms that the instruments and Jens Kidman's vocals follow, but upon closer inspection, they mesh perfectly,



if not conventionally. Fredrik Thordendal continues to impress with the experimental guitar sounds he used on his solo album, making the guitar mimic a violin, a wind instrument, or something like the mating cry of an alien being. It's no wonder that serious musicians are in love with these guys.

All eight tracks are classics – my favorites being “New Millennium Cyanide Christ,” “Sane” (a re-recorded version of the song on the ‘97 album *The True Human Design*), and closer “Elastic.” And for a total mindfuck, make sure you listen to the entire length of “Elastic,” as the guitar fadeout morphs into the sound of steel girders groaning on the point of collapse and then ringing out into an insane, subliminal frequency... I don't want to ruin it. Experience it for yourself.

— Scott Wilcox

Mistigo Varggoth Darkestra

The Key to the Gates of Apocalypses (The End)



After delivering the ultimate extreme black-metal album, *To the Gates of Blasphemous Fire*, with his band Nokturnal Mortum, guitarist Kniaz Varggoth wrote and recorded this one-track, 72-minute opus by himself under the name **Mistigo Varggoth Darkestra**. This is actually the second album recorded under the banner of Varggoth's side project, but the first to be released.

The Key to the Gates of Apocalypses is primarily a black-metal album with chilling ambient keyboard effects used liberally. The music is mostly mid-paced and generally simpler, dirtier sounding, and more hateful than Nokturnal

Mortum. There are definite discernable movements in the piece that could be broken up into specific songs, but this would break up the continuous assault on the ears that the album is so successful at doing. Similar themes recur throughout, drawing parallels to early portions of the song while driving the behemoth ahead, showing the skill at orchestration that Varggoth possesses.

Both the intro and outro of the album are very long. This can be equated to deep-sea diving; one doesn't want to descend or ascend too quickly. Rather, the body (and in this case, the mind) needs to be acclimated to its new surroundings. Things start off with just a hint of menace, with nothing more than a background hum and the howl of a lone wolf. Eventually, other sounds emerge: chains, goats bleating, chanting, war drums, marching soldiers, and explosions. These sounds all combine into a cacophony that abruptly stops, and then the black-metal assault of guitar, bass, and drums begins. You have arrived... this is Hell.

In between the movements of the piece are atmospheric interludes; for example, the first one has a keyboard melody with some kind of wild beast growling over it. Near the end, the sound morphs to almost total electronics and gradually returns the listener to his own world.

The main thing holding this album back is the effort that must be put in to listen to it. Blocking out 72 minutes of the day to sit and listen to an album is a big commitment, and I fear it will be too intimidating for many metal fans. But take it from me: It's worth the effort.

— Scott Wilcox

Nightstick

Death to Music (Relapse)

This is fucked. This music is not right, and it's made by people who aren't right. There's music made by smart and reasonably normal people who are just playing acting at being evil (Alice Cooper



and Ozzy Osbourne, for example), and then there's music that's so fucked, so evil, that there's no way the people making the music are law-abiding citizens. That's where **Nightstick** comes into play. This album begins with a nine-minute exorcism of hate called “Babykiller” and continues in that vein. Like fellow sludgerockers Electric Wizard (Nightstick is the only band thanked on the inside of EW's *Supercoven* album), Nightstick construct a wall of noisy hate with huge chunks of distorted guitar and not much else. This is nowhere near as hedonistic as Electric Wizard, though. The only thing Nightstick seems to take genuine pleasure in is hating your fucking ass with a burning passion. There are no tempos to speak of, but the “tunes” don't plod so much as bash. There are also lots of spiffy guitar leads courtesy of “22 year old ‘70s-obsessed acid-casualty” Cotie Cowgill to spice things up, but ultimately all of the music's facets point towards one common goal, which is to slash your face open and pour acid in the wound. My claims may seem highly exaggerated, but judge not before you've experienced the majesty of Nightstick's hatred.

—Brian Varney

Nocturnal Breed

Aggressor (Pavement)

Cheers to Pavement for giving this much-talked-about album a domestic release. Norway's **Nocturnal Breed** are unabashedly, unashamedly old-school thrash/black metal, in the vein of Venom and Bathory. While better than most in the “retro” movement,

the moments of brilliance are spotty.

My favorites of the 11 songs are the two earliest: “Dead Dominion” and “Raping the Angels,” originally released on a Hot Records compilation. These tracks add some tasteful keyboards to the down and dirty mix, giving the songs some depth, which is missing on the rest of the album. For some reason, no keyboards are used on the later songs.

As for the rest of the tracks, most are short, frantic tunes seeming to be straight out of the mid-'80s and ranging from fist-banging anthems to self-parody. The exception is “Maggot Master,” which is a bit longer, employing catchy riffs and a blazing end solo that shows this band may have something more to offer in the future.

The rough production and general hurried sound make this seem like a side project, in which case I would probably judge it less harshly. My humble advice for improvements: Don't be afraid of the keyboards, let your songs go a bit longer than two-and-a-half minutes, and invest in some better cover art (this one looks like a 12-year-old copied Judas Priest's *Hero*, *Hero* cover). *Aggressor* is an enjoyable diversion, but it doesn't make Nocturnal Breed essential – not yet at least.

— Scott Wilcox

Old Funeral

Older Ones (Hammerheart)

Some of you may be well-versed in your Norwegian metal history and recognize the moniker, Old Funeral. For those not familiar with this death metal band, they had two members who are now prominent figures in the black metal scene: Abbath of Immortal and the infamous Varg Vikernes of Burzum who needs no introduction. Older Ones is a compilation of Old Funeral's demos and tracks that were never released on their ill-fated first album. It has none of the striking melodies of black metal, in fact there's nary a nascent black

The Older Ones



ened element to be found. What this album has is 12 tracks of raw and highly brutish metal that showed some incredible promise had Old Funeral continued as a band.

—Paul E. Lee

Opeth

Still Life (Peaceville)

I picked Hypocrisy's self-titled as my top album of '99, but I'd have to say **Opeth's** mesmerising fourth opus, *Still Life*, has seductively shuffled ol' Peter Tagtgren from the perch. I can't stop playing this thing. It's just the brainiest blend of unique progressive rock, mysterious folk, and high-flying perfection extreme I've ever had the pleasure of hearing. With a new label, Mikael Akerfeldt is still laid back and unimpressed, even calling himself lazy, citing how the band wrote most of this in the studio and rehearsed it fleetingly. Well, if it works, go for it. I mean, for most bands, kicking off with an eleven minute song is just begging for one click of the skip button, but Opeth's "The Moor" is an insane masterwork — elegant, mellow stuff you actually want to hear. Voivodian timechange switchbacks kick it down a devilish death metal pathway, back to the folk, themes ebbing, flowing, swaying, foreboding, approximating the (very) original King Crimson crossed with Satyricon (there's both Wetton and Lake in Akerfeldt's vocal), or Voivod embracing the madness of Michel's beloved Van Der Graaf Generator. Tracks two and four, "Godhead's Lament" and "Moonlapse Vertigo," are nearly as earth-shattering, in much the same way; Opeth break all the rules and deliver whatever they like as a style, as long as it makes you sad, then

angry, and finally despondent that you didn't write it first. Another amazing thing: the balance between clean vocals and death vocals is such that the death is used sparingly for attitude and effect, and actually delivers that, rather than fatigue. You want it there because there's a clean interplay right around the corner (likely accompanied by a cobwebbed acoustic guitar) and it's situated on snakey, progressive, and very metallic structures that place this band at the fore of an extreme bunch that includes Arch Enemy, Katatonia, Dark Tranquillity, Amorphis, and Hypocrisy. Beautiful, panoramic stuff. I mean, there's even a five-minute acoustic number called "Benighted" that's extremely sorrowful, frightening, and hooky enough that you can just enjoy it as a new form of quiet heavy metal, a slippery dovetail between the opening mindbender and the final four mindbends, each leaving you thirsting for more virtuosity, drama, and pathos.

—Martin Popoff

Rosa Crux

Noctes Insomnes (Rosa Crux Productions)

This CD is a little hard to get used to. First of all, the music is styled along the lines of church Goth, not spooky-girls-with-too-much-eyeliner Goth, and secondly, it's sung entirely in Latin. However, once you get past these two "obstacles," the CD is amazing. From leafing through the packaging (the disc box is loaded with beautiful paintings, photographs, and lithographs of etched infant skulls, enormous church bells, and of course the band) and listening to the music to accessing the CD-ROM (which I couldn't, because for some reason my ex-husband had used the CD-ROM drive as a cup holder), the whole presentation of *Noctes Insomnes* is somber, resigned, and dark. The instrumentation and recording quality are both beautiful, capturing the feel of actually being inside some

ancient pit of a building, complete with echoes and hollow-sounding feedback.

— Holly Day

Shootyz Groove

High Definition

(Kinetic/Reprise)

Mark my words: A year or so from now when the general consciousness wakes up and realizes Limp Bizkit are really kinda silly, they'll discover **Shootyz Groove**. That's a bold statement and one that won't win many friends, but it's the truth. Shootyz Groove, even for those not into rap/rock hybrids, is the best of the best. Now the world just has to realize it. And it is. Slowly.

You've probably heard "L Train" or seen the video, and that's not even the best song on the record. Catchy as a cold, practically every song has a chorus that'll stick in your head for days, if not longer. When you combine memorable choruses with eyebrow-arching electronics, samples, and loops, you've gotta keeper. *High Definition* combines the funky bass'n'beats, the traded raps, and the crushing guitar work fans have come to expect, and Shootyz Groove have taken huge leaps forward in the keyboard and catchy chorus departments. Imagine Faith No More, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the deep bass boom of hip hop, and the booty-shakin' of, well, Sugar Ray and Smashmouth at their best, all combined into one.

Mix in some distinct NYC attitude, a bit of reggae, and some of the best production around (courtesy of Machine) and you've got an album you've gotta get. In addition to "Easily," the closest thing to a ballad they've ever done, they cover XTC's classic "Dear God." High Definition is a confident step for the band, and one that carries them into the third millennium as top contenders.

—Scott Hefflon

Sinergy

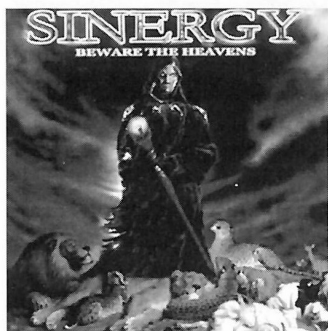
Beware the Heavens

(Nuclear Blast)

Sinergy is the all-star collaboration of Kimberly Goss, the pudgy-looking-but-really-not, Gothed-out-Margaret-Cho-lookin' ex-back-up singer of Dimmu Borgir, guitarists Jesper Stromblad of In Flames and Alexi Liahos of Children of Bodom, bassist Sharlee D'Angelo of Mercyful Fate, and some drummer guy named Ronny Milianowitz. The band was meant to be a side project, but since Kim got booted ("eventual departure" sayeth the bio) from Dimmu, hell, she wants to make the thing "full-time." Yet with credentials like that, you'd expect more from *Beware the Heavens*. Truth be told, it's kind of a nice show-off vehicle for the guitarists (not that they really need to prove jack shit), but the melodies and the vocal projection are either trite or amusingly archaic. I'm talkin' '80s



Sinergy



melodic speed/ power metal; screaming riffs playfully lobbed about over rhythms Helloween scrapped a decade ago; "belted out" female vocals which never really grab you, kinda like most songs by Warlock or something. Sure, it's a debut and Kim's first time fronting, but she just doesn't (yet, to be nice) have the presence needed to lead the band to victory. Basically, it sounds like a high school cover band with two mind-blowing guitarists who somehow (cute chick? impressive resumes?) scored a record deal.

—Scott Hefflon

Six Feet Under
Maximum Violence
 (Metal Blade)



Six Feet Under are one of the rare cases in which a side project becomes bigger than its parent bands. Originally formed by Chris Barnes (former vocalist for Cannibal Corpse) and Allen West (guitarist for Obituary), Six Feet Under surpassed the popularity of both bands with their debut *The Haunted* and the breakthrough *Warpath*. However, critics of the band claimed that the sound was too derivative of West's full-time band.

Those critics now will have to

find something else to criticize, because the departure of Allen West and his replacement by former Massacre guitarist Steve Swanson have taken the band in another direction. Rather than continuing in the extremely groove-oriented vein of the past, *Maximum Violence* is a back-to-basics death metal album that's sure to please fans of Barnes-era Cannibal Corpse. As a matter of fact, this album sounds more like the follow-up to Cannibal Corpse's best album (and the last with Barnes), *The Bleeding* from 1994.

Exit the clean vocals and political lyrics, and welcome back the death growl and gore-soaked subject matter. The Swanson/Barnes co-written songs are still as catchy as past Six Feet Under songs, but are chunkier and have an extra edge of aggression. Opener "Feasting on the Blood of the Insane" perfectly illustrates the style of these songs, heavier than ever, but still filled with hooks. For the first time, drummer Greg Call and bassist Terry Butler contribute to the songwriting process, collaborating with Barnes on five tracks. These songs tend to be slower and dirtier than the rest, with a heavy doom influence.

Highlights on the album are the aforementioned "Feasting..." "No Warning Shot," Kiss cover "War Machine," "This Graveyard Earth," and closer "Hacked To Pieces," a tribute to Barnes's Cannibal Corpse lyrics. While a new direction for Six Feet Under, *Maximum Violence* has a welcome sound to longtime death metal fans, and this will contribute to another successful album.

— Scott Wilcox

Stuck Mojo
 HVY1 (Century Media)

Constantly building their reputation through touring and friendly interaction with their crowd, **Stuck Mojo** have become Century Media's biggest selling band in the U.S. (maybe, maybe not: these things are said once and we all spit-swap them until they're ingrained). In any



event, they're a great live band, and HVY1 is their live document, after a bit of line-up turmoil and break-up rumors, slamming with that large exacting hardcore rap groove this band finds without sounding trend-faced. Moreover, Stuck Mojo manage to make this feel like a sun-dappled festival gig in the '70s, which is victory #1. Victory #2 is the perfectly crystalline production by longtime bud Andy Sneap, who grabs the band's brisk and shocking groove engineering, and locks down the bolts so all you hear is the sweet ching of metal. Victory #3, however, is the crowning achievement: the two studio tracks. "Reborn": my God, where do I start? Suffice it to say, this is a masterpiece, the best song Faith No More never wrote, stout-of-hook, sugared with a perfectly-placed keyboard line (the same one that iced "Rainbow In The Dark"), and then rooted like a big oak with three different, blindingly beautiful guitar riffs. And with that chorus, this song should be a smash hit. "My Will" is also crunchy neo-metal science. If you can get past the first bass'n'drums half verse letdown, you're safe to once more get stuck and infected by a guitar'n'flamethrower rap metal verve

that is life itself. Hotlanta damn, this bodes well for the next studio album, to be sure.

—Martin Popoff

Suicidal Tendencies
Freedumb (Side One Dummy)

You know, I loved the first **Suicidal Tendencies** record—and not just for the song about Pepsi either. At the time, they were pretty damned fresh and new and had an amazing sense of humor, especially compared to a lot of the other punk bands at the time. If they had just recorded that one record and bowed out gracefully, their legacy would have been left intact and when people thought about them, they wouldn't only think about the Pepsi song, they'd wonder why such a great band had never made any more records and theorize on how great they could've been if they'd only made more albums. Unfortunately, that's never the case. So many great debuts are followed by stinker after stinker, with the bands just never knowing when to quit—and then you can't quit, I guess, because you can't bow out gracefully without putting together just one more album as great as that first brilliant release.

Such is the case with Suicidal Tendencies. Fluctuating between being a punk band, a metal band, and a Mexican rock band with each new release, their music keeps getting weaker and less convincing. And hell, at this point, it's obvious they're not even suicidal because they're fucking old now. I'm old now, and I was

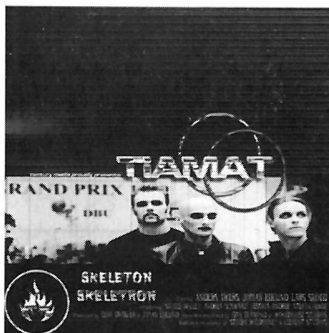


arely 12 when their first album came out. So anyway, this new album? More of the same, with the notable exception of some truly excellent bass work from newcomer Josh Paul. If they're going to keep on doing this, they'd better plan on keeping him on, because he and only he makes this album.

— Holly Day

Tiamat

Skeleton Skeletron (Century Media)



Together ten years now, **Tiamat** has grown from a growl'n'roar death metal band to a mature, yet chillingly malevolent, band who skate the fine lines of sensuous Goth metal, thick and heavy molasses metal, and ambient artiness without dipping into cliché or irony.

Tiamat's groundbreaking epic, *Wildhoney*, opened like an evil ogre on a bender and closed with the wind blowing through trees, a faint Floydian melody sparkling like dew on the leaves, all without a stitch out of place. The transition was so smooth, you never said, "Oh, here's where they start to get mellow." A

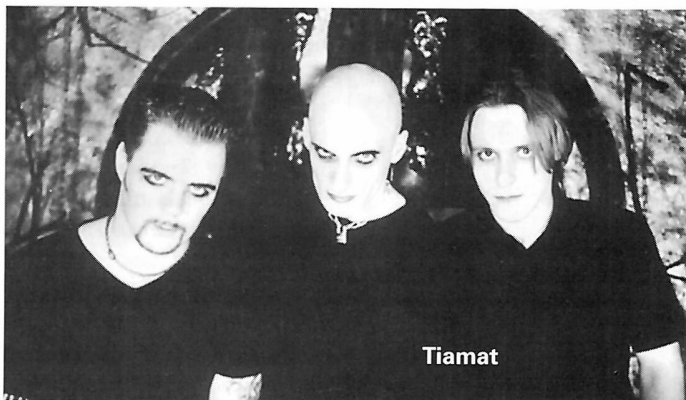
Deeper Kind of Slumber was similar, but was more consistently mellow and, um, tiresome. Without the juxtaposition of animosity lurking just beneath the surface, the record flowed in and out of itself, starting where it ended and ending where it started. *Skeleton Skeletron*, on the other hand, combines harsh slabs of guitars with Johan Edlund's breathy, shadowy, rich, and expressive voice. The melodies are strong without being intentionally infectious, the lyrics seem targeted at urban dwelling and inter-personal human minglings rather than some alien fixation or fantasyland psychodrama drivel, and while the end-to-end flow actually does go somewhere, each song individually offers structured dynamics and tasty ear candy. And the keyboards, samples, and sound effects are not to be overlooked... Subtle, like a hand-carved doorway, exquisite in detail, yet overshadowed due to the dangerously calm, gleaming-eyed madman standing in it, rhythmically tapping a huge, bloody club on the sole of his dirt-caked boot.

—Scott Hefflon

Today Is The Day

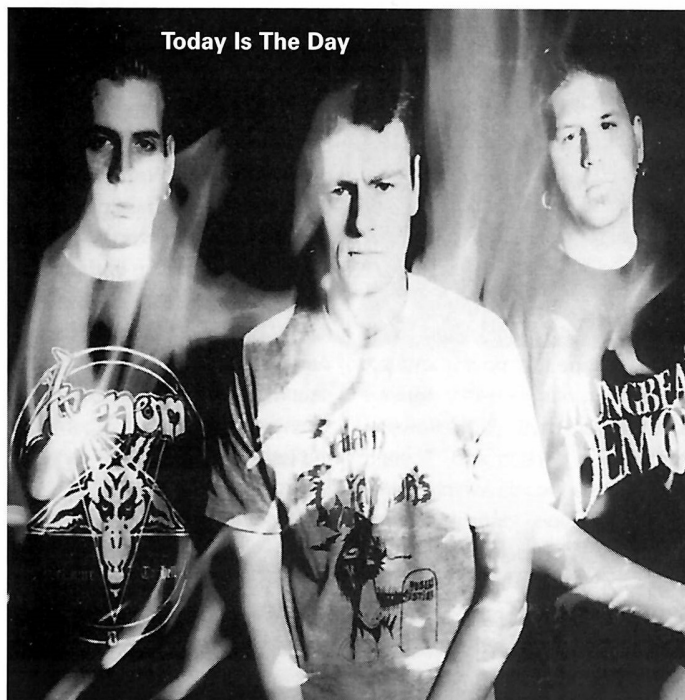
In the Eyes of God (Relapse)

I don't even know where to begin. I've finally been exposed to the most hyped band in the noise-core genre, and it's made me its bitch. I've been hearing about **Today Is The Day** since my high school days (when the band was on Amphetamine Reptile and touring with Helmet), but God knows why I never took everyone's advice and checked them out.



Tiamat

Today Is The Day



In the Eyes of God is the meanest, most inspirational, morbid, and haunted piece of vile I've heard in a long fucking time. In terms of sheer evilness, TITD ass rapes Deicide and Immortal. And they do it without all the silly make-up and postures. There's no hesitation whatsoever: it's pure nightmare from the get-go. Eerie, ghost-like singing that switches to hemorrhoid-inducing screams compliments the frighten-

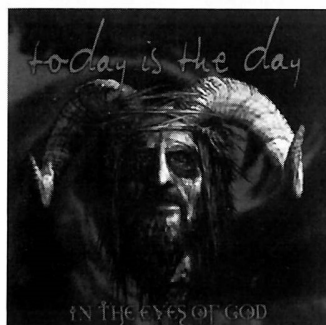
—Tim Den

Trelldom

Til Et Annet... (Hammerheart)

I was beginning to think that raw, old school Nordic black metal was becoming a thing of the past until **Trelldom** came along. These Norwegians have a fierce dedication to the black art and uphold all the low-tech qualities established by their forebears. The main man behind Trelldom is Gahhl, better known as the throat of the best, most underrated of the old school Norwegian bands, Gorgoroth. Trelldom's roots are cultivated from the raw blackened masters like Darkthrone and Mayhem, and yet Trelldom have their own approach.

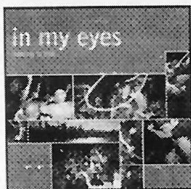
One of Trelldom's grandest qualities is the variety and depth of Gahhl's vokills. His shrieks, moans, and malevolent, clean voice are amazing. Add to this a raw, no-keyboard approach with a very Grieghallen sound that often borders on black metal meets punk, especially in "Slave til en kommand natt." "Min dod til ende" has an epic, Viking sound with a melody and pace you could swing your beer stein (or battle axe) to. The final song, "Sowar dreyri," is a ten-minute song based around



ing madness they call songs. The recording is heavier than fuck, but not so that the interwoven tapestry of the instruments gets overwhelmed. Every little bend, feedback, pinch harmonic, shred riff, and magnet slide up the neck (that's what it sounds like at least) can be heard... and is terribly offensive to your well-being. I need a fresh pair of underpants and someone to put my eyes back in my sockets.

ZIPPIDY-DOO-DAH

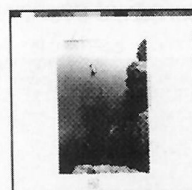
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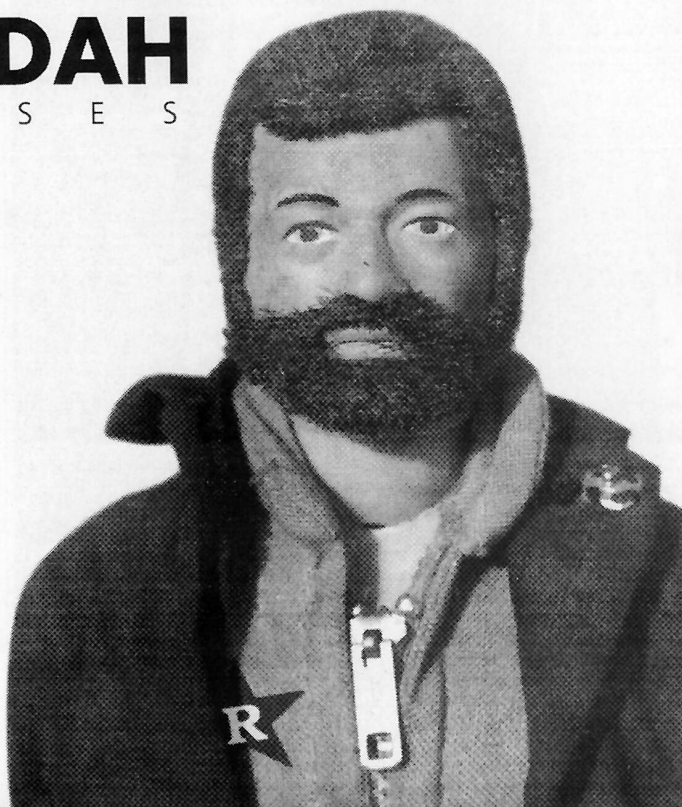
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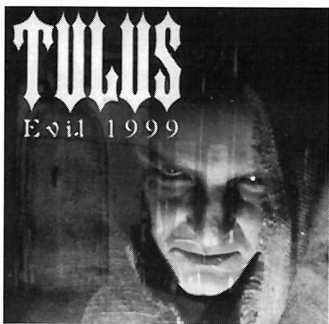




a repetitive, melodic riff similar to some songs on Darkthrone's Transyl-vanian Hunger with Gahhl doing his creepiest voices throughout.

—Paul E. Lee

Tulus



Evil 1999 (Hammerheart)

Tulus are the hired axes for fellow Norwegian Galder and his killer band, Old Man's Child. Certainly Galder's influence is felt on *Evil 1999*, but what makes Tulus so kick-ass is that they meld their influences by adding some novel twists. The bass player takes a very prominent part in the sound with a Helmet-like thud in the crunch of "Draug," which also breaks down into a mellow, almost bluesy section. I love the guitar, drums, and keys in black metal, but thank God a bass player is getting to show his meddle in the metal. "Sjel" starts off with an almost jazzy riff, and pace that again smacks of Helmet. I've never heard a black metal track like it.

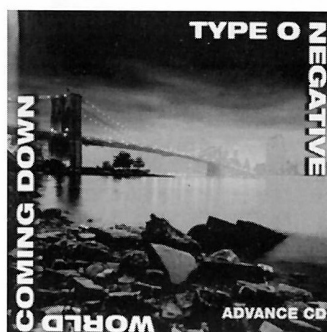
Evil 1999 is, by far, one of the most deadly releases to come out of Norway this year. According to the bio, Tulus has released another CD on Hot Records (owned by one of the guys in Dimmu Borgir). You

must have this disc if you truly hunger for black or European dark metal.

—Paul E. Lee

Type O Negative *World Coming Down* (Roadrunner)

If you peel away the layers of sexuality, debauchery, love, loss, and carnage of both Carnivore and **Type O Negative**, you'll find an undercurrent of classic rock. Covers of "Cinnamon Girl" and "Summer Breeze" on previous releases pointed in that direction, but it really comes to light on *World Coming Down* (which includes a cover of "Day Tripper"). While there're still Gothic elements, tuned-low buzzsaw guitars, and a metallish group roar, there are now melodies and progressions that, contrary to their dreary Sabbath depth, are actually kinda poppy and, dare I say, finger-snapping. Another new kink is the oft-feared inevitability of maturity. They say no one dies an atheist, likewise it's hard to pretend to welcome the chilling fingers of death when you've seen them tear loved ones away from you in a way not nearly as romantic as song lyrics like to describe. Death is a bitch, and Type



O have met the cunt a few times. While "Everyone I Love is Dead" isn't as catchy (or as good a song, to be honest) as previous singles, the repeated chorus has a vibe that'll really get beneath your skin. It's bound to be misinterpreted by the alabaster-skinned crowd, rocking slowly back and forth in self-fortified misery and self-pity, but the true meaning behind it – the loss, the loneliness, and the knowledge that, like it or not, you have to persevere as time takes more and more of what matters to you away – shit, that's the real horror of it. At the end of the line (in the song, I mean), Peter Steele bellows "Goddamn it!" cuz he's not one to curl up like a whining little pussy and give up. He's angry, and I'd bet he'll give Death a good whuppin' before he gives up the ghost.

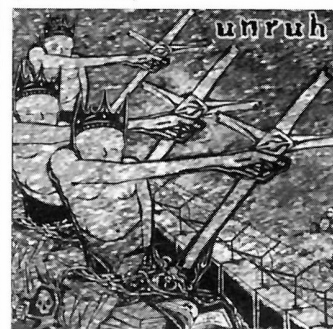
When all's said and done, *World Coming Down* has sludgy

moments of brutal beauty, and plenty of doom-flavored psychedelic rock that only barely masks the image of Peter skipping about, throwing flowers. Ugh. While I have faith he'd skip like a Frankenstein monster, snarl like a convict, and some of the lilies would actually be sharp rocks, I hope his fancy for fruity melodies subsides soon and we can get back to some good ol' wrist-slashing gloom. Be uplifting and thoughtful on your time, buddy, we pay for your deepest, darkest, most morbid thoughts.

—Scott Hefflon

Unruh

Setting Fire To Sinking Ships
(Pessimiser)



Unruh has a great mix of '80's speed metal and early '90's crust. The guitars are reminiscent of Kreator in the early days, and the vocals are from early SoCal squat style Logical Nonsense. The bass is a tuned down sludge from similar to that of Grief. It spews heaviness. With so many bands sounding like they just discovered Black Sabbath, it's nice to hear something a little off the beaten path.

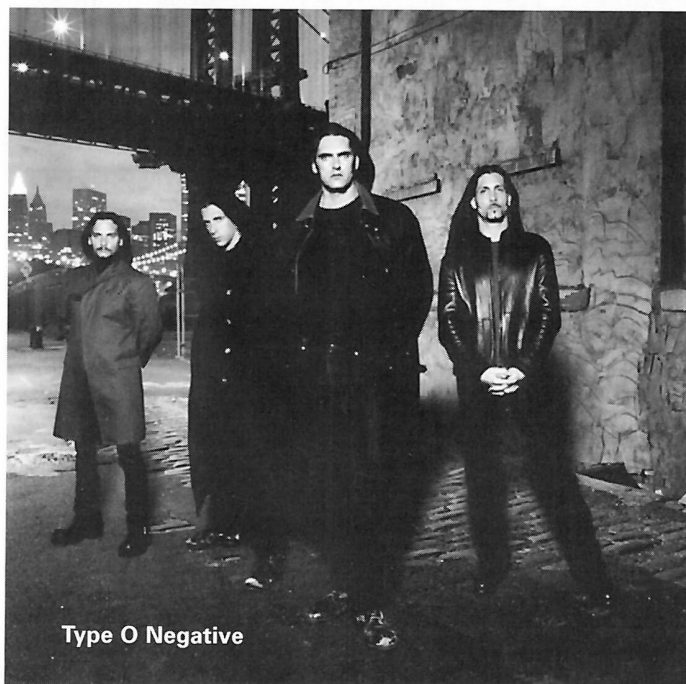
—Myk

Warlord

Rock the Foe Hammer
(Solid State)

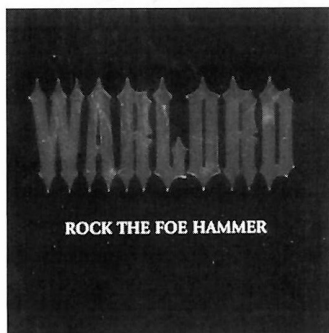
Plain black cover. **Warlord**. Rock the Foe Hammer. This is totally going to be a Metallica rip-off. You know you've seen too many of these bands when you can tell exactly what music they play before you even put the disc on. (Note to bands: Pay attention to your graphic design.)

Waitamminute... "Produced



by Steve Austin"? As in Today Is The Day's Steve Austin? That can't be right... Well, fuck me in the ass and call me Richard Gere... This ain't nothin' close to cheesy metal! This is down'n'dirty New Mexico/wild west shoot-out music. The kind that'd blast out of a futuristic, neo-western saloon on the edge of the Gobilaasan Desert in the year 3457 A.D. The kind of tobacco-chewin', gumbleedin', tougher-than-dried-leather guitarwork and general self-destruction that only Steve Austin can provide. Fueled by anti-religion liquor ("When Reality Sinks In") and bounty hunter coldness ("Wolf to Eat"), even Yul and the Magnificent Seven would rather lick a thousand boots than run into these guys in a dark brothel. Pillaging the villages of Neurosis (for power), Today Is The Day (for heaviness), and Unsane (for "who gives a fuck" and "I'll cannibalize your mother without blinking an eye"), Warlord is an entity that deserves fear from all. Don't let the smiling photos fool you, they're laughing because they lured you into their lair with the "metal" band name and cover art... Now they will feast on you.

—Tim Den



Zimmer's Hole

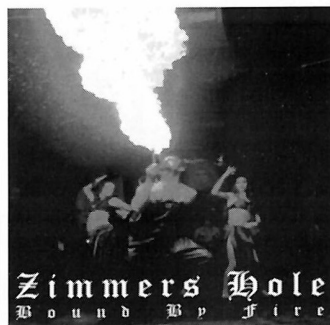
Bound by Fire
(USG/HeavyDevvy)

Remember when A.C. was still funny? Remember when Gwar wrote sick songs that sounded like a game show gone terribly, terribly wrong? Ever heard of NoMeansNo? Well, leave it to Canadian madman

Devin Townsend and Friends to uncap finger-snapping melodies, eye-blinking noise bursts, and dark metal comedy the likes of which we don't see much 'round these parts... I think this is the side-project of Jeb Simon (also of Strapping Young Lad and FLA) and maybe some of his wacky cohorts, it's kinda hard to tell cuz there's no bio that makes sense and the CD booklet credits "Lorde of Ass-fire" and such. Song titles, printed in no particular order, include "Metal," "Gospel Sodomy Boy on Blow," "Porkrind Toes," "Waste of Towels," "Peanut Butter Kitty," and "Hell Comes to Breakfast." It's kinda hard to line up titles with what pass for songs here, but I'm sure gonna have a lot of fun trying.

For those unfamiliar with the mighty Strapping Young Lad (SYL to us cool folks), get with it. Seeing as these guys can play better than most of the pretentious jerk-offs they're "parodying," they're worthy of yer respect and a good chuckle. Choir harmonies are stacked so high it reminds me of that scene at the end of *Airplane!* where the two heroes are kissing and the lovey-dovey music cracks and shrieks as they escalate into impossible ranges. Death-metal roars are so big and dopey you just have to chuckle, and there are more tips of the hat to Sabbath, Maiden, Priest, and others than you can possibly count. So for anyone into brutal noise, the deathiest of the death, with a sense of humor, ya gotta get this. Yeah, that oughta sell at least a dozen copies.

—Scott Hefflon



BWBK

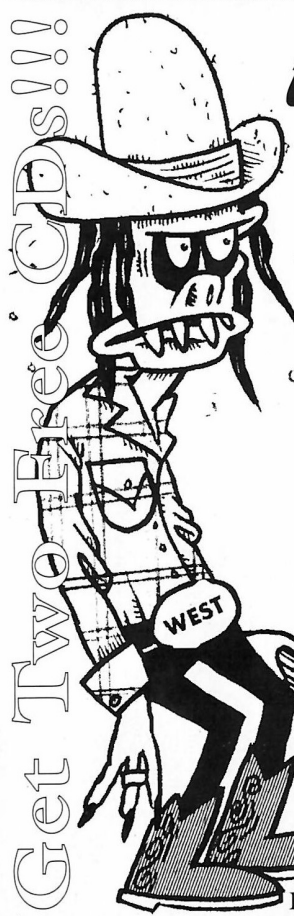
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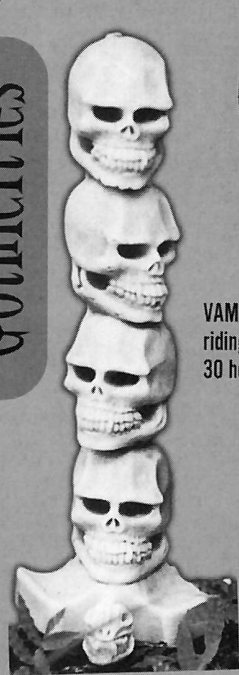
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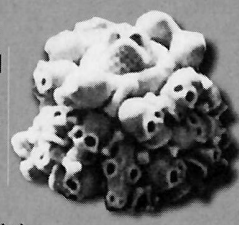
Gothicities



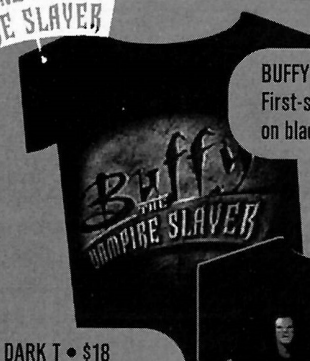
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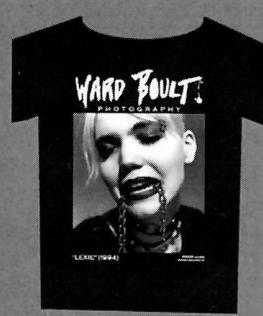


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FRONT



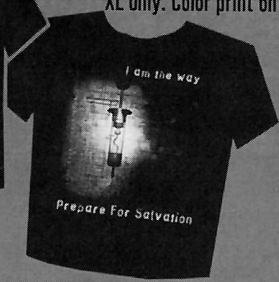
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ZINES

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• Issue 6: Dweezil Zappa; My Dying Bride; the real Frankenstein Castle; sacred rats in India; Angry Johnny & the Killbillies; the art of Clifford Pickover; Papua New Guinea volunteer police force of foreigners, lots of fiction.

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SHORT BLASTS

Reviews by
Scott Wilcox

Ashes: And the Angels Wept (Necropolis). Simple but well executed black metal with rock 'n' roll tendencies. The clean production and raw emotion help this EP stand out from the pack.

Burnt Offering: Walk Of The Dead (S.O.D. Records). A decade after their debut, Burnt Offering returns to deliver 11 slabs of thick, meaty American death metal. If you miss the early days of the Florida death metal scene, this is for you.

Carpe Tenebrum: Mirrored Hate Painting (Hammerheart). Dimmu Borgir's Nagash tries his hand at extreme black metal, with forgettable results. Notable for being the first Peter Tagtgren-produced album I've heard that sounds like complete trash. If not for Nagash's fame, this album would be

ignored.

The Crown: Hell Is Here (Metal Blade). Pretty typical Swedish death/thrash with childish Satanic lyrics. Fun the first few listens, but don't expect to burn a hole in it with your CD player.

Daemon: The Second Coming (Diehard Music). Nicke Andersson (The Hellacopters) couldn't make it to this second album of his death-metal side project with Anders Lundemark (Konkhra), but it is great nonetheless. More rock-based than the debut and loads of fun.

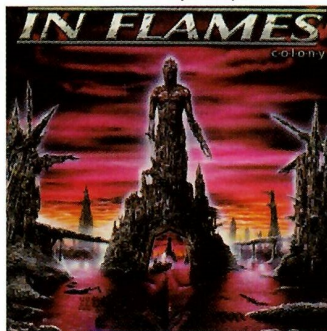


Dimmu Borgir/Old Man's Child: Devil's Path/In the Shades of Life (Hammerheart). This split is made up of Dimmu Borgir's out of print '96 EP and Old Man's Child's

'94 demo. A must for completists who missed out on these two recordings the first time around, and a nice surrogate for Dimmu Borgir's disappointing new material.

Extol: Burial (Solid State). Technically brilliant but musically retarded, this Norwegian Christian metal band are way too eager to show off everything they can do. There's one thing they can't do – write a good song.

Hades Almighty: Millen-nium Nocturne (Hammerheart). Formerly known simply as Hades, this is another band formed from the ashes of Old Funeral (from which Burzum and Immortal also sprung). Though not as famous as some of their Norwegian brethren, Hades Almighty are a great black-metal band with a unique epic sound.



Highly recommended.

In Flames: Colony (Nuclear Blast). Continuing on their breakthrough path of melodic death metal, In Flames use a bit more traditional and folk influences this time. As expected, they pull it off expertly.

In The Woods...: Strange in Stereo (Misanthropy): In The

Woods... are no longer recognizable as a former black-metal band but now concentrate on atmospheric art rock with a techno flavor. Truly original, but the band is too enamored with their own sound, causing the album to seem very long.

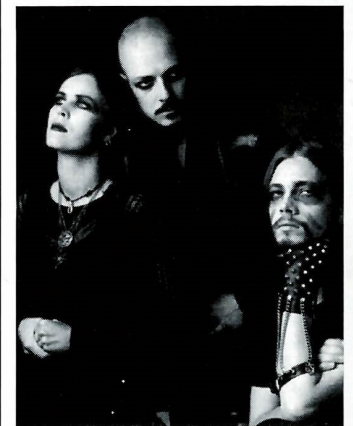
Madder Mortem: Mercury (Misanthropy). Strange doomy, sorrowful music with excellent female vocals. Both minimalist and grandiose arrangements are used to great effect. Not traditionally heavy, but unique.

The Mist: Gottverlassen (Pavement). Brazilian thrash band featuring Jairo Guedz, formerly of Sepultura. A nice slab of '80s thrash metal, but nothing exceptional.

October Tide: Grey Dawn (Avantgarde Records). Kata-tonia's Jonas Renske shows his love for old Katatonia fans with this album, which goes back to the early sound of the band. A treasure for all of those disappointed in Discouraged Ones.

Overdose: Circus Of Death (Pavement). Re-release of Overdose's '92 album, their breakthrough in their native Brazil. Finally available domestically, maybe now this criminally ignored band will get the attention they deserve. A mixture of thrash and death, with tribal rhythms that Sepultura didn't discover until years later.

Peccatum: Strangling from Within (Candlelight). The side project of Em and her brother Lord Pz, Peccatum are dedicated to the melding of metal with classical and operatic influences. There is something for everyone, whether you like black metal, traditional metal,





progressive, Gothic, etc. A great experimental album.

Prophany: Stronger than Steel (Death/Metal Blade). Combines the vocals and extreme speed of black metal with the lyrics, solos and general melodicism of power metal for a new yet familiar sound. A strange marriage, but it works.

Pyramid: Pyramid (Arise). Spain's Pyramid play excellent progressive metal without copying Dream Theater or Fates Warning. This is a true gem for prog fans; the kind of album that reveals new layers with every listen.

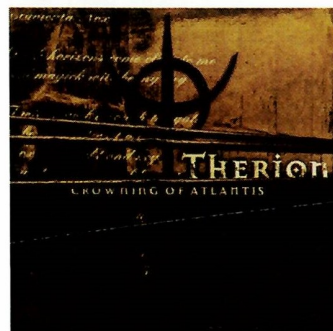
Soil: Throttle Junkies (MIA). Soil's first full-length incorporates Southern rock influences for their entry into the American hard-rock resurgence. The earthy sound should appeal to longtime rock fans and new ones who don't remember when there was no such thing as grunge. A bright light in the



wastelands of mainstream music.

Solarized: Neanderthal Speedway (Man's Ruin). Psychedelic rock with a killer retro distorted guitar sound. The band features members of Daisycutter and Monster Magnet.

Taake: Nattestad Ser Porten Vid (Avantgarde Records/ Wounded Love). This one-man project delivers a seven-part, 40-minute epic that epitomizes everything that is good about Norwegian black



metal. A masterpiece.

Therion: Crowning Of Atlantis (Nuclear Blast). This hodgepodge contains four originals, three covers and three live tracks. This continues in Therion's classical metal fusion, and if you are a fan of that (and who isn't?), this is mandatory. Of special attention is the cover of Manowar's

"Thor."

Unholy: Gracefallen (Avantgarde Records). Top-shelf doom metal with both death and female vocals. Just enough beauty is included in the sludgy sound to truly evoke feelings of suicide. Doom at its absolute finest.

Usurper: Usurper II: Skeletal Season (Necropolis). Usurper are emerging from their image as Celtic Frost clones and solidifying their own sound. The filthy noise on this album conjures images of brisk autumn nights and the smell of bonfires. A true marriage of ancient death metal and modern black metal.



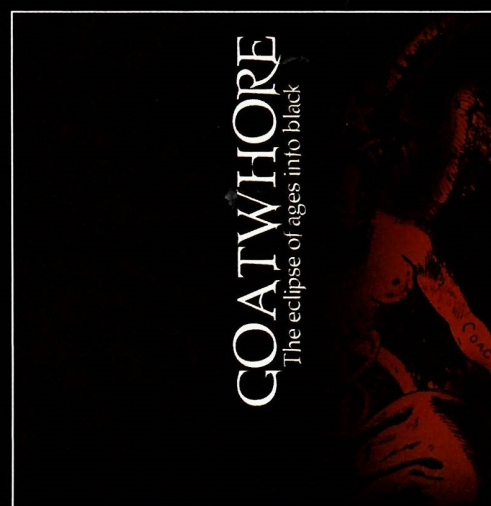
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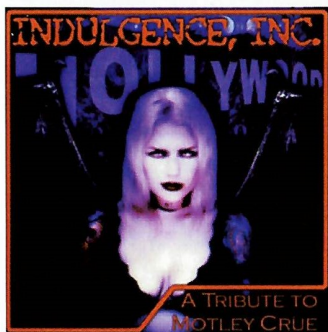
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GOATWHORE

Forgoing their Scandinavian brothers in arms' current fascination with orchestration, gothic drama and vampiric twaddle, Goatwhore's raw, hateful, Bayou black metal recalls such evil pioneers as Venom, Bathory and Celtic Frost. Fueled by Ben (Soilent Green) Falgout's hellish wailing and Sammy (Acid Bath, Crowbar) Duet's flesh-peeling riffage, Goatwhore's unrelenting, gleefully demonic debut, Eclipse of the Ages Into Black, proves Satan is alive and well in the Louisiana swamps.

Compilations



Indulgence, Inc.

A Tribute to Mötley Crüe (Dwell)

Here's little something different in the Dwell comp series:

some of these bands can sing. And I've heard of a few of them. They're not just eighth-rate death metal bands – they're garagy rock, semi-industrial, punk, hard rock, and, um, bad rock bands. Luckily, most of the bands chose material from the first couple Crüe albums, but the choices from their "dark period" (actually, when they were lite and fruity) and understandable. Rewind open the tribute with "Dr. Feelgood," the song/album that, to me, signified that the Crüe were done sucking and wanted to put out sleaze again. And while it didn't last long, that record still plays in my house when I'm all fucked up and don't give a shit that my neighbors are trying to sleep. Doom Kounty Electric Chair pop in with a schlocky "Too Fast for Love," and while I like The Donnas' cover better, this is my new second-favorite cover of one of the best slut-rock songs written. Seeing as I have little invested in the "Wild Side" (or "Wild Slide" as Dwell types it), I like Needulhed's industrial tinkering with it. And while I like Streetwalkin' Cheetahs (and they won Best Live Band in L.A. or something, if I believe the email bombardment I got but never really read), their cover of "Live Wire" opens with a cringingly missed vocal note, the song being out of the vocalist's range. I've certainly heard this oft-covered classic slaughtered worse,

but I've also heard far better from the band. Screechy glam fags, Revlon Red, cover "Stick to Your Guns," a song that they probably shouldn't have taken so to heart. Now here's a petty grievance, but it's one that matters: tracking. Whoever chose the track listing shoulda never put "Stick to Your Guns" next to "Come on and Dance" because the opening guitar riffs are similar. While Mick Mars has a right to adapt a riff years later, Dwell should've noticed the similarity when compiling the songs... The Bastards cover "Come on and Dance," and the minor setback of RevRed is forgotten. While the singer can't hit some of the notes, neither could Vince, and this cover has the same dark, sleazy slither that made the original great. The cockeyed guitar solo and cowbell-knocking are done perfectly, and the faded intro to the next song (on Too Fast for Love, that is), "Public Enemy #1," is just what the doctor ordered. The Bastards know Mötley Crüe – they get it. Unfortunately, NC Thirteens screw up "Shout at the Devil," a song any hack high school metal band coulda done better. Other unenlightening but not horrifying tracks are provided by the Sinisters, Doorslam-mer, Libertine, the B-Movie Rats, and Dementia. Luckily, the three chicks of Tuuli save the day with "Girls, Girls, Girls." While they sound like The Eternal Opening Band (they just don't have "it," playing by-the-book with very little identity and inflection they can call their own), the simple fact that it's cute chicks brings to mind an all-girl group grope which, of course, is every guy's wet dream. Tuuli open with the motorcycle revving by going "Vroom, vroom!" and you fall in love right then and there. Someone sign these gals so we can see more of them, so to speak.

But few of these covers were worth the trouble. There's more to it than playing the notes and grunting

the words, fellas. And that's all she wrote.

—Chaz Thorndike

Death...Is Just The Beginning V (Nuclear Blast)

Part five in the Nuclear Blast catalog onslaught consists of two discs as usual, which feature about 75% unreleased material. Many bands that NB have chosen not to release domestically are included. Disc one is mostly black metal, and disc two is mostly power metal and death metal. There are lots of highlights on the two discs, but they're easily picked out without actually listening to it. On the power metal side, unreleased tracks by Hollow and Primal Fear rule the roost. On the black metal disc, there's unreleased material by Dimmu Borgir, Children Of Bodom, Agathodaimon, and In Flames, among others. This is always one of the best comp series going.

—Myk



Kiss of Death

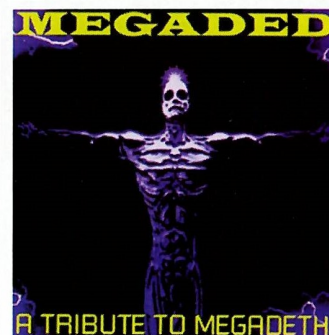
A Sikk Tribute to Kiss (Dwell)

Oh God... As if Kiss weren't enough of a parody of their former selves, here's the Dwell Records treatment of Kiss classics, as performed by mediocre death'n'growl bands you've never heard of and hope to never hear of again. While I commend a few of the bands for choosing less obvious songs, I'd like to group slap them all for death-ing-up classic songs, many of which

are greatly overrated to begin with. The best failures are the bands who keep some kind of authentic sound to the song (meaning it sounds thin and old), and the worst failures are the growling monkeys that simply play the songs in their own, totally generic death style. Dim highlights are From the Depths taking on "Rocket Ride," Tchort's struggling with "I Love it Loud" (guilty pleasure, that), Debauchery's "Detroit Rock City" (I think it's the tripity-trip kick drum and authentically sparse guitarwork), and Scary German Guy's laugh-as-you-roar-a-long take on "Shout it Out Loud." Then again, I'm predisposed to like those songs anyway.

If you've always loved the way Pantera (among many other guilty parties) destroyed Kiss songs, well, here's the wreckage of even more of 'em. Bands I hope to never meet: Hostile Intent, Blood Coven, Shallows of the Mundane, Hate Theory, Acheron, Equinox, Crematorium, and Vile.

—Chaz Thorndike



Megadeth

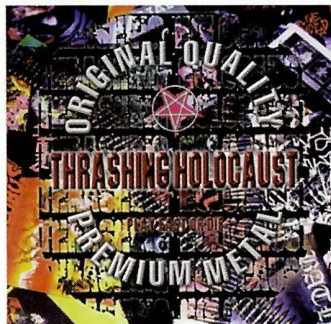
A Tribute to Megadeth (Dwell)

None can deny the impact Megadeth has had on the metal world. Arguments about when they started to suck have raged since their second album, and many (myself included) take great pleasure in hating later,

more popular records, yet owning and playing them as much as the earlier, cherished material. So it was only a matter of time 'til Dwell would release a tribute to the band, as they've done the same with Metallica, Slayer, Iron Maiden, and Celtic Frost. As usual, there are a few moments of beauty, a lot of passages you liked before the band fudged 'em, and, in general, lots of bands you've never heard of doing covers of songs that were just fine before they touched them. A pleasure is Killswitch's take on "The Conjuring," one of my faves as a fan and former guitarist of bad metal bands you've hopefully never heard of. Killswitch is a side-project of Flotsam and Jetsam, a semi-decent/semi-ignorable band from that time period whose main claim to fame is that Jason Newsted quit the band to join the soon-to-be-artsy Metallica.

The main thing wrong here is that, like it or not, Dave Mustaine has a very identifiable voice. His sneer may grate your nerves like fingernails on a chalkboard, but at least you know it's Dr. D. The bands assembled here to pay homage (or rage, pillage, and slaughter) just don't have that kind of charisma, much less talent. They can play the notes (sometimes), and they can sing the words (or growl in chuckle-worthy "death voice"), but most of them just can't seem to capture any kind of meaning. And Megadeth, if they were good for anything, can be credited with being on the short list of bands who made rebel metal anthems out of hating the system for specific, mostly political, reasons that actually made sense, all the while providing solos and fills suburban metal-heads could leap about playing air guitar to. Fatal Influence's cover of "Hook in Mouth" comes close enough to the original (like it's a tough song) for repeated listenings, and since it's one of my faves (one a paddy wagon-full of metal-heads sung at the top of their lungs), that's saying something.

Bands you'll probably never hear of again: Darkside, Fury, Mind-Ashes, Skull Crusher, Fairlight, Habeas Corpus, Abhorrent, Wasteland, Pessimist, and Daemos.



—Chaz Thorndike

Thrashing Holocaust (Necropolis)

An aptly titled comp, this contains over 70 minutes of the new breed of thrash from around the world. Speed and riffs are the coin of the realm, as it was and as it always woulda been in the metal kingdom had nū metal not entered stage left and lulled the lullable with "urban groove" (a loud, polished, crushing, yet monotonous guitar rhythm that slams like a hammer on an anvil but offers no interesting fretboard gymnastics for aspiring shred-ders). And yet there is hope...

When thrash flourished in the late '80s, prior to it being watered down by Anthrax in "I'm the Man" and other novelties, it was founded on half-step "evil" riffs and fills, manic drumming, and snakespit vocals. Kreator was top notch, but yer welcome to chose your favorites. Slayer brought it home to American audiences (Hell Awaits and Reign in Blood), and Cali-rock bands like Metallica, Megadeth, Exodus, Testament, and a shitload of others successfully watered it down, album after album, until it no longer resembled its gory, "metal thrashing mad" origins. Such is the way of things. For the uninitiated, think "Damage, Inc" and "Battery." Then speed the shit out of it, make

it sound "dirty," and hire a vocalist who barely even sounds human: that's thrash. That's the way it started, and that's the way it is again with The New Breed. And Necropolis has done a fine job of assembling some of the most dangerous, bloodthirsty, ultra-violent, speed-addled lunatics on the planet for Thrashing Holocaust.

Without being retro or stuck in the '80s like so many hair-metal bands, the bands on Thrashing Holocaust have unearthed the roots of the style, and they obviously live it in the present. While in theory it doesn't sound tough, few seem to be able to play any "classic" genre without sounded dated. But this is fresh, I assure you, and it's violent, borderline insane, sometimes goofy (thrash had/has the wonderful tendency to use Evil Dead cackles and falsetto screeches that, while frightening to your parents, are actually kinda dorky), and faster-than-your-heartbeat-after-gulping-four-cups-of-strong-coffee drumming. And most of all, it sounds ugly, the way metal oughta. None of this polished-for-the-metal-masses crap that "commercial alternative" radio plays: this is a step deeper into the soil, down where the light doesn't reach, where worms slither against skin and feel like the caress of a lover, and the smell of decay is the perfume of lust. Oh yeah, millennial survivors desperately need to get away from the glare of their computer screens, the glossified sound of their music, and return to the earth for a little good ol' dirt-caked death'n'destruction.

While kinda fizzling toward the end, Thrashing Holocaust closes strong and mean. You need this. Put away the valuables and smash things with Witchery, Desaster, Absu, Nocturnal Breed, Deathwitch, Sadistic Intent, Sabbath, The Ancients Rebirth, Lordes Werre, Metal Lucifer, Inferno, Abominator, Usurper, Abigail, Desekrator, Terror Squad, Dekapitator, Satanic Slaughter, and Ashes.

If you have trouble finding any of the above-mentioned albums, contact the record label:

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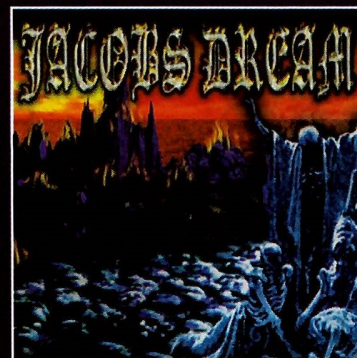
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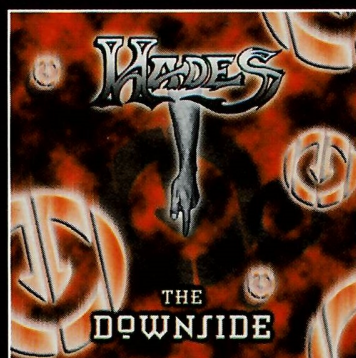
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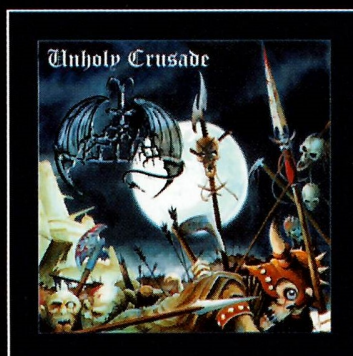
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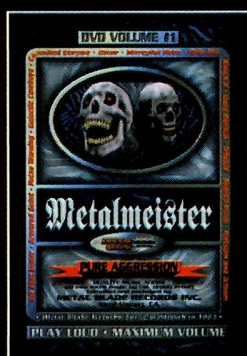
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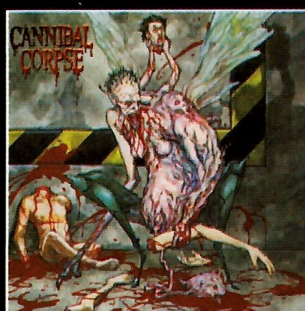
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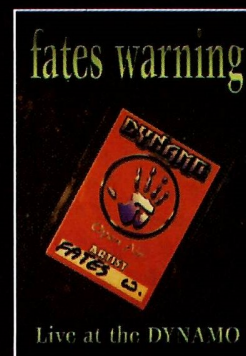


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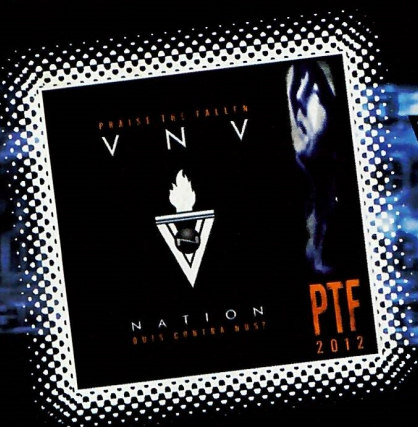
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